

*Adopted March 7, 1994*

# 1994 MOUNT AIRY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Mayor

Gerald R. Johnson

## Town Council

R. Delaine Hobbs, President  
Oliver H. Davis  
David W. Pyatt  
Marcum N. Nance  
William E. Wagner

## Planning Commission

Frederick W. Goundry, Chairman  
Keith R. Gehle, Vice-Chairman  
William M. Teppig  
Roman Z. Stolinski  
Clark M. Wagner  
Clayton M. McKittrick, (alternate)

## Town Staff

Teresa M. Bamberger, Town Planner  
B. J. Dixon, Planning & Zoning Clerk

## Carroll County Liaison Planner

Sandra L. Baber

## Frederick County Liaison Planner

Elizabeth Pasierb

## INTRODUCTION

### History of the Master Plan of Mt. Airy

Mt. Airy's first Town Master Plan was adopted in 1970. This document was subsequently revised in 1973 primarily to address annexations of over 480 acres that increased the Town's land area by 50% between 1970 and 1973. In 1978 the Planning Commission realized that the rate and magnitude of growth, both within and outside the Town boundaries, was far outpacing the projections contained in the 1973 Master Plan. With the support and encouragement of the newly created Mt. Airy Civic Association, the Planning Commission completed an update of the Town Master Plan in 1980 with adoption by the Town Council in 1982.

Sound planning policies dictate that the Master Plan be given a cursory review on an annual basis and a comprehensive update at least once every 5 years. Since 1975, the Town Planning Commission has completed an annual review of planning and development related activities, reflected in the Town's Annual Planning Reports that are completed in February of each year.

During the 1980's the Town again experienced rapid development and approved several large annexations. In 1989 the Planning Commission began this update of the 1982 Master Plan.

### The 1994 Comprehensive Plan

Mt. Airy's rapid growth in the 80's is typical of many towns outside major metropolitan areas across the country. In many communities this rapid development has significantly impacted natural resources and threatens to outpace the capacity of utility and infrastructure systems. Another effect of this growth that is equally important is a growing perception that the qualities of communities are being lost.

Mt. Airy has done well to avoid many development-related problems: however, there is a real concern that the qualities of Mt. Airy that attract new residents are becoming endangered by the development that accommodates this growth.

It is the intent and purpose of this Master Plan to envision a future for Mt. Airy that builds on the features of the community and guides development in a way that is beneficial to the Town's citizens and respectful of the environment. The proposals in this Master Plan are a careful balance of both qualitative issues such as streetscapes and neighborhood character, and quantitative issues such as population, zoning, and utilities.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. Establish Mt. Airy's Role in Regional Issues</b>	
A. Regional Growth Influences	2
B. No-Growth Policies and Problems	10
C. Policies to Address Regional Growth Impacts on the Town Character	13
D. Policy Summary	19
<b>II. Protect Natural Resources</b>	
A. Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act	24
B. Forest Conservation	31
C. Groundwater Resources	33
D. Policy Summary	39
<b>III. Enhance the Public Realm</b>	
A. Identify & Preserve Existing Community Features	42
B. Analysis of the Town Structure	49
C. Development of the Community Framework	54
D. Improve the Quality of New Development	60
E. Policy Summary	66
<b>IV. Land Use &amp; Zoning</b>	
A. Zoning and the Town Character	69
B. Review of Existing Land-Use & Zoning	77
C. Proposed Zoning Categories	90
D. 1994 Comprehensive Land-Use Plan	100
E. Future Annexation Areas	104
<b>V. Balance Growth and Community Needs</b>	
A. Transportation	112
B. Water System	118
C. Sewer System	122
D. Schools	126
E. Parks & Recreation	130
F. Emergency Services	136
G. Other Public Facilities & Services	137
H. Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances	137
<b>VI. Implementation</b>	141
<b>Appendix A: Directory of Planning Agencies &amp; Organizations</b>	

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure # / Title</i>	<i>page #</i>
<b>Chapter 1:</b>	
1 Regional Development Trends	1
2 Population Growth, 1900 - 1990	2
3 Regional Population by Election Districts	3
4 Howard County 1990 General Plan	4
5 D.C. Region Wedges & Corridors Plan	5
6 1982 Damascus Master Plan, Montgomery County	5
7 Frederick County Community Concept	6
8 New Market Regional Plan Update	6
9 Southwest Carroll County Comprehensive Plan	7
10 Surrounding County Zoning & Permitted Development	8
11 Dorsey Avenue	9
12 Mt. Airy Pharmacy (old train station)	9
13 Future Growth Patterns	11
14 Large-Lot Residential Development	11
15 Aerial View of Large Lot Development	12
16 Existing Regional Traffic Patterns	13
17 Proposed Regional Traffic Patterns	14
18 Ultimate Town Boundaries	16
19 Surrounding Land-Uses Supported	17
20 Gateways & Thoroughfares Plan	18
21 Regionalism Policies	21
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	
22 Streams Tributaries from Mount Airy to the Chesapeake Bay	23
23 Stream Buffer Width Calculations	26
24 Topography	27
25 Natural Features	29
26 Forest Shapes & Functions	32
27 Water Resource Management Areas	35
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	
28 Mt. Airy's Town Logo	41
29 Existing Features	43
30 View North to St. James Episcopal Church From Main Street	45
31 Views to Pine Grove Chapel	45

**Chapter 3 (cont.):**

32	Mt. Airy Historic District	46
33	Mt. Airy Train Station	47
34	Calvary United Methodist Church	47
35	View of Buildings in Downtown	48
36	View of Homes on S. Main St.	48
37	Three Basic Street Systems	49
38	Hierarchy Established by Street Systems	49
39	Mt. Airy's Street Patterns Prior to 1969	50
40	Current Street Patterns and New Developments	51
41	Expansion of Inter-connected Street Systems	52
42	Single-Entrance Subdivisions	52
43	Older Development Patterns	53
44	Newer Development Patterns	53
45	Community Framework Plan 1, Main Street	55
46	Community Framework Plan 2, East-West Linear Park	57
47	Community Framework Plan 3, Neighborhood Centers & Interconnected Street System	59
48	Site Analysis Plan	61
49	Concept Plan	61
50	Street Sections	63
51	Street Sections	63
52	Street Sections	63
53	Design Guidelines	65
54	Design Guidelines	65
55	Community Framework	67

**Chapter 4:**

56	View of Older Development	70
57	View of New Development	70
58	Plan of Typically Isolated New Development	71
59	View of Interconnected Street System	72
60	Lot Grading on Hillside	73
61	Original Plan for Nottingham Village	74
62	Final Plan for Nottingham Village	74
63	Parking Pads in Front Yards	75
64	Professional Office Conversion	76
65	Entry Drive To Townhome Development	76
66	Existing Land-Use	79
67	Existing Zoning	81
68	Vacant Land Inventory	83

**Chapter 4 (cont.):**

69	Vacant Land Inventory Chart	85
70	Typical R-1, Low-Density Residential Development	87
71	Typical R-2, Medium-Density Residential Development	87
72	Commercial Development in the Downtown	89
73	Community Commercial Development, Twin Arch Shopping Center	89
74	Rural Reserve Zone - Sample Site Plan	91
75	Low-Density Residential Zone - Sample Site Plan	93
76	Medium-Density Residential Zone - Sample Site Plan	95
77	R-5/Neighborhood Center Zone - Sample Site Plan	97
78	High-Density Residential Zone - Sample Site Plan	98
79	Section View of Sample Site	98
80	Commercial Site Plan	99
81	1994 Comprehensive Land-Use Plan	101
82	Future Annexation Areas	107

**Chapter 5:**

83	Primary Street Network in 1970	113
84	Primary Street Network in 1990	113
85	Proposed Street System	115
86	Town Wells & Their Watersheds	119
87	Sewer System, Sewer & Water Service Areas	123
88	Elementary School District Boundaries	127
89	Middle School District Boundaries	128
90	High School District Boundaries	129
91	Parks & Recreation Plan	133
92	Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Service Area	136

## I. ESTABLISH MT. AIRY'S ROLE IN REGIONAL ISSUES

There are many factors that contribute to development pressures in Mt. Airy: Mt. Airy is within commuting distance of Washington D.C., Baltimore and Frederick, located at the intersection of two major highways, functions as a regional center for a four-county planning area, and is considered an attractive place to live. While Mt. Airy will continue to feel development pressure, the Town can play a central role in determining the nature of future development by understanding and responding to the various regional growth influences. This chapter examines the sources of growth in the Mt. Airy area, the impact of regional development on the Town, and sets policies for the management of these impacts.

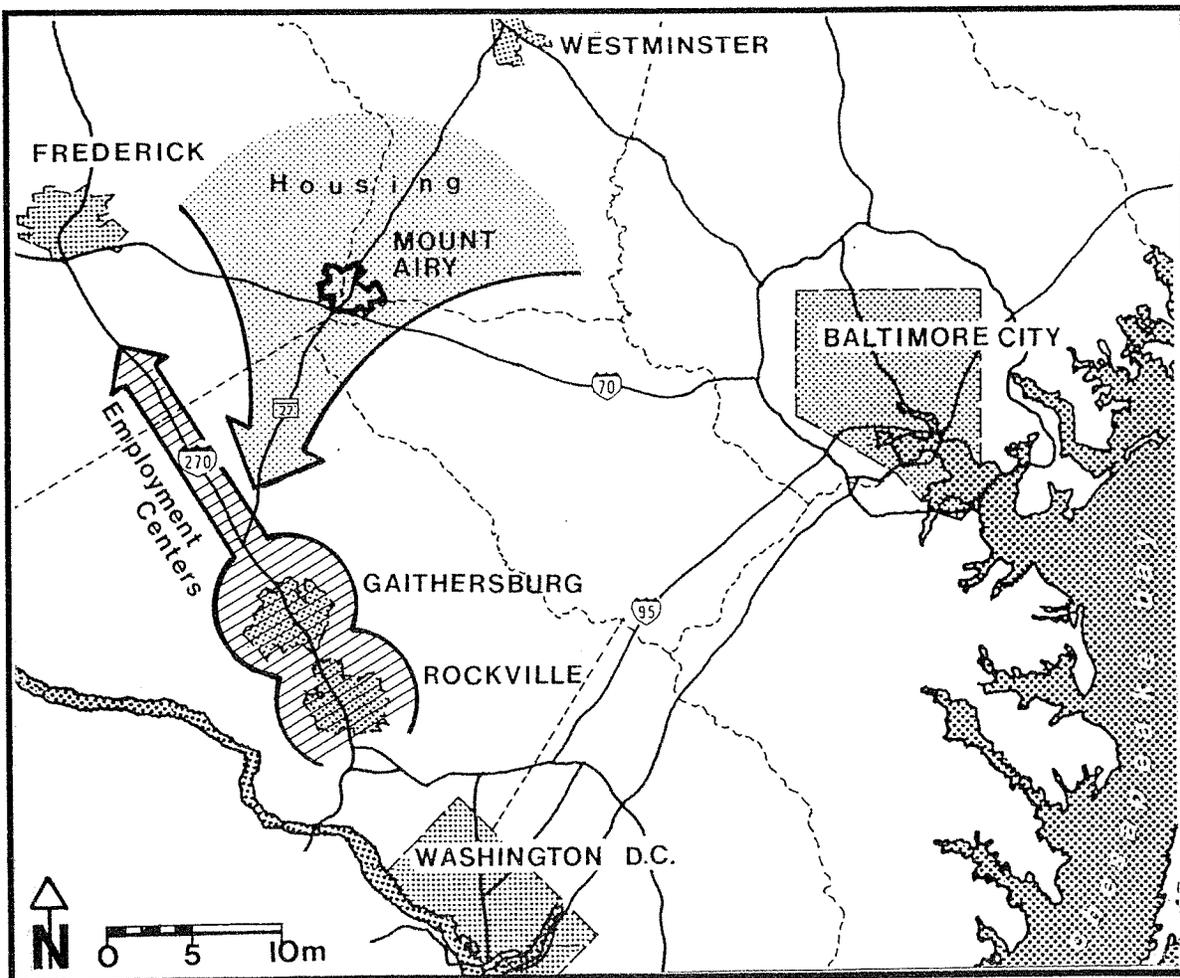


Figure 1: Regional Development Trends

## A. REGIONAL GROWTH INFLUENCES

1. *Mt. Airy's growth is strongly related to its proximity to metropolitan Washington D.C., Baltimore and Frederick.*

Growth in Mount Airy is following the growth patterns of municipalities along the I-270 corridor outside the metropolitan D.C. area. The north-west growth of metropolitan D.C. was accelerated by the completion of improvements to I-270 in the late 1960's. Located along I-270, Rockville and Gaithersburg grew quickly as bedroom communities. During the 1970's and 1980's these areas developed into thriving employment centers.

Mt. Airy, approximately 13 miles from I-270 via Md. Route 27, is being similarly affected by the strength of development along the I-270 corridor. Mt. Airy and the surrounding rural areas of Frederick, Howard and Carroll counties have seen significant residential development that houses the workforce of the I-270 employment centers. Mt. Airy's population grew about 33% each decade from 1940 - 1970. From 1970 to 1980 the rate of growth was almost 40%, and from 1980 to 1990 the growth rate topped 50%. According to a community survey conducted in December of 1988, over half of the residents responding worked in Montgomery County and Washington D.C., with the remaining respondents equally distributed between jobs in Howard, Carroll, Baltimore, and Frederick counties.

Although residential growth has been the primary result of the expanding metropolitan area on the Town, commercial development is growing to meet the needs of the larger population and there is interest in the provision of employment opportunities within the Town. A recent combination of rezonings and annexations has increased Mt. Airy's available, undeveloped commercial and industrial acreage to approximately 375 acres. This is almost double the total industrial and commercial acreage already developed, (approximately 200 acres.)

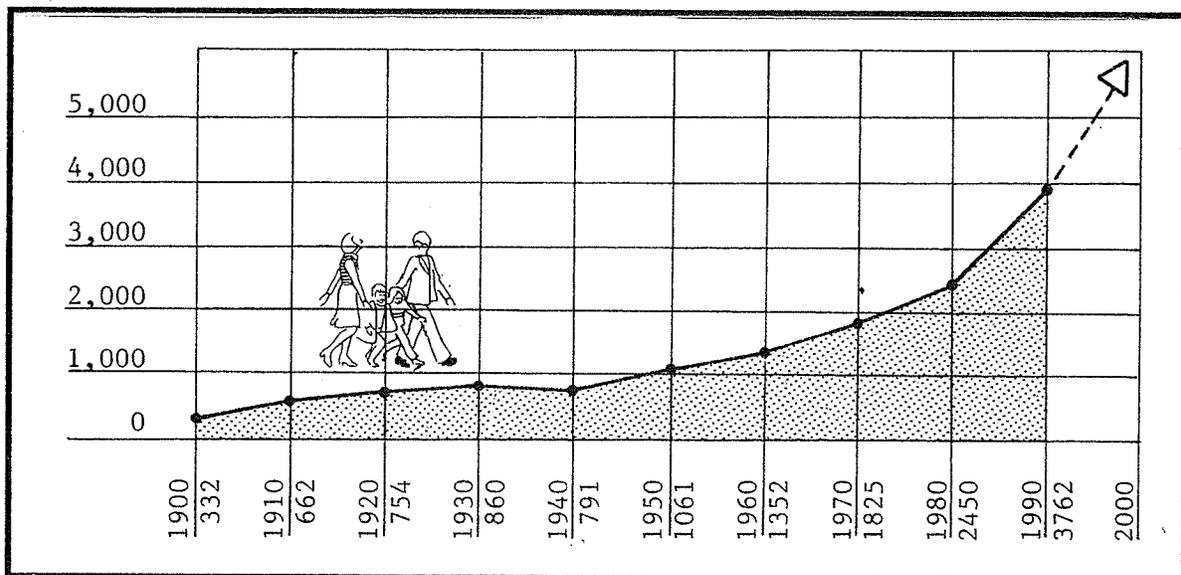


Figure 2: Population Growth, 1900 - 1990

2. *Mt. Airy's growth is influenced by its access to I-70 and Rt. 27.*

Mt. Airy is located at the interchange of I-70 and Rt. 27. I-70 is a major east-west interstate highway and directly connects Mt. Airy to Baltimore and the City of Frederick. Rt. 27 is an important north-south state highway, connecting Mt. Airy to I-270 and Westminster.

While I-270 is a heavily-developed employment corridor, I-70 has not been subject to significant development activity. In addition, neither Howard County nor Frederick County, which encompass the majority of the I-70 corridor between Baltimore and Frederick, are planning for substantial interstate-related growth. In the 1990 Howard County General Plan only one area along I-70 is planned for growth as a future employment center, however this is a long range plan. Such development would depend on road improvements and development of an independent water and sewer system in that area.

Mt. Airy is the largest of the two existing municipalities along I-70 between Baltimore and Frederick. To date this has resulted in some highway related development, such as fast food restaurants, convenience stores and gas stations. New Market, the only other existing municipality along I-70, has a population of 328 according to the 1990 Census. Development has occurred around New Market, although this is largely limited to disbursed residential development. Mt. Airy, therefore, could easily benefit from its location along I-70 in attracting desired commercial development.

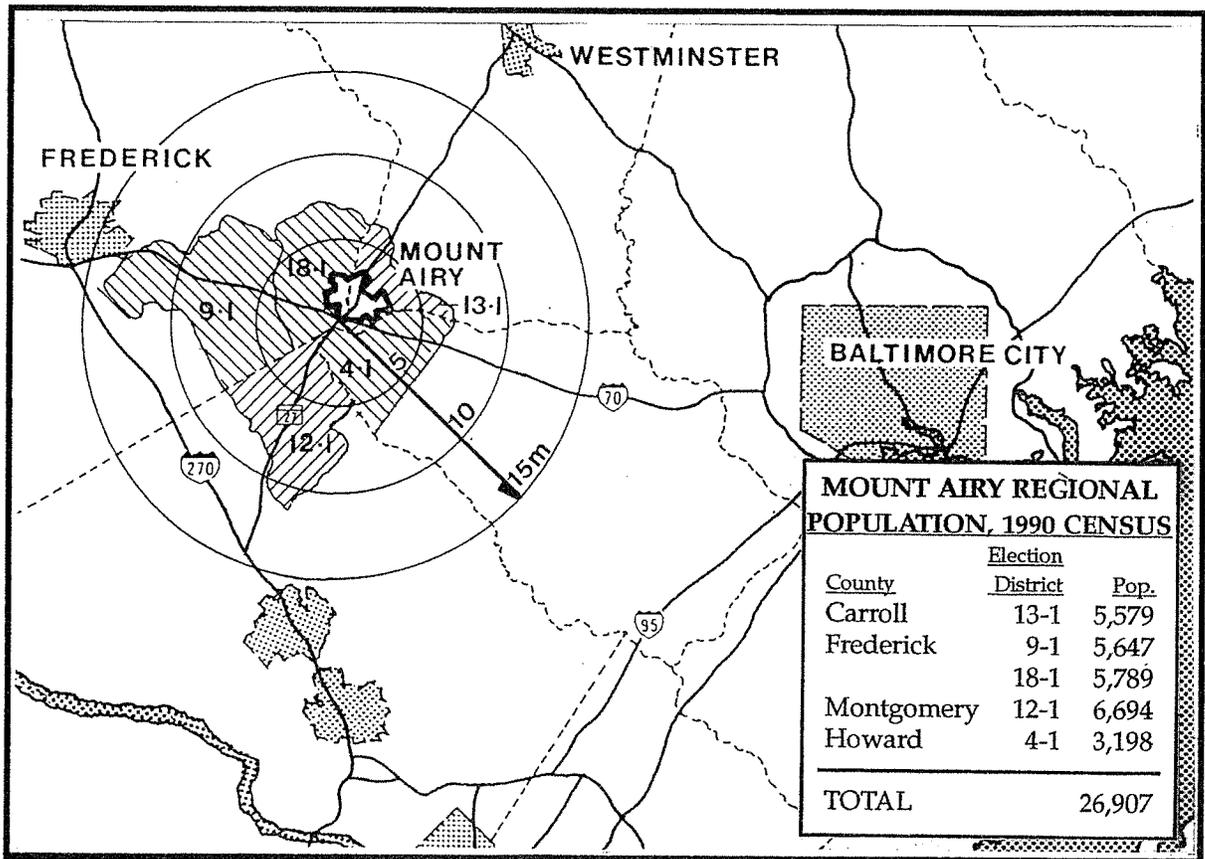


Figure 3: Regional Population by Election Districts

3. *Mt. Airy is not close to comparable community centers and will grow as a hub for commercial services not provided in surrounding areas.*

According to the 1990 Census, there was a total of 26,907 persons in the five election districts around Mt. Airy. Four of these five districts are almost entirely within a 7-mile radius of Mt. Airy. With the exception of Damascus, approximately 6 miles to the south, the nearest comparable service areas to the west, north or east are 15 miles away. This indicates that services available within Mt. Airy are sustaining a four-county area with a population more than 5 times the population of the Town. This has several implications which will be discussed throughout the Master Plan, but largely illustrates that development in all four counties affects the Town, and close coordination with county planning and funding policies is necessary for the balanced growth of the Town.

4. *Mt. Airy's future growth will be affected by surrounding County planning policies that focus new growth around existing community centers.*

Howard County: According to their 1990 General Plan, Howard County plans to concentrate development around existing community centers. However the 1990 General Plan did not suggest additional development near Mt. Airy, but considered the area of the county near Mt. Airy as part of the "rural west." Howard County has maintained a policy of preservation for the western half of the county and has applied the Rural-Conservation Zoning District to this area. This designation requires clustering on approximately 1-acre lots at a ratio of 1 unit per 4.25 acres of gross acreage for the overall parcel. Much of the land whose development rights have been purchased through the Howard County Agricultural Preservation program is located west of MD 94, close to Mt. Airy. Although not explicitly stated in the Master Plan, it must be assumed that commercial development in Mt. Airy will provide services to this western region of Howard County since no other commercial areas in western Howard County were identified.

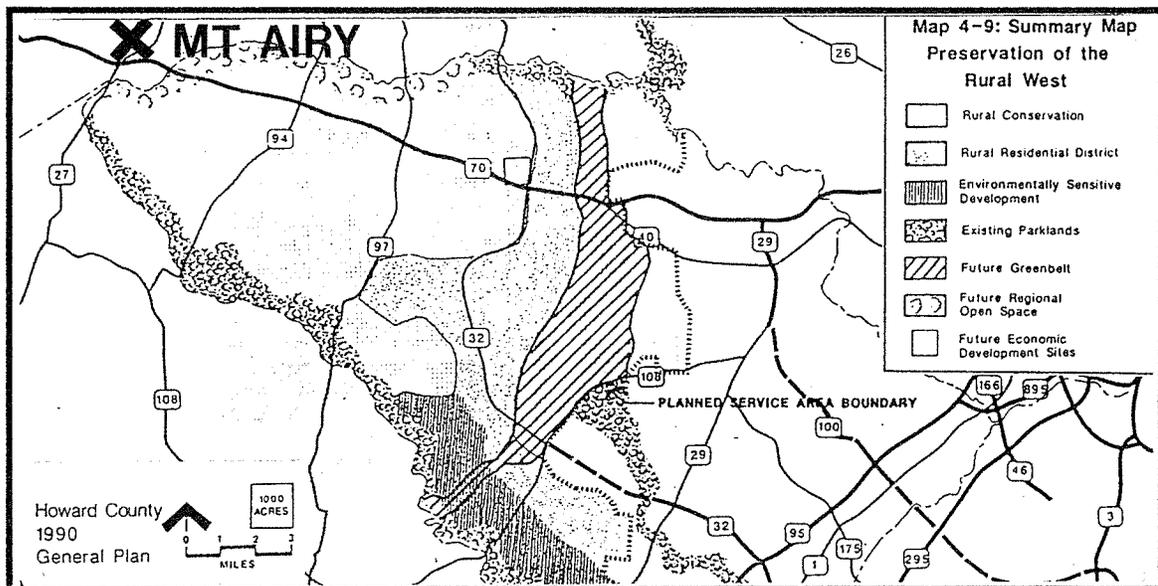


Figure 4: Howard County 1990 General Plan

Montgomery County: Montgomery County has maintained planning policies outlined in the "Wedges and Corridors Plan" adopted in 1964 for the metropolitan region. This plan calls for development of regional centers along planned transportation corridors, and preservation of agricultural land that fills in the remaining land "wedges." The Mt. Airy region falls within a wedge. According to the 1982 Damascus Master Plan, the current planned water and sewer service areas for the County extend from I-270 to Damascus along Rt. 27. Land between Damascus and Mt. Airy is zoned agricultural. A significant amount of residential development has been approved in Frederick County to the west of the Montgomery County line which will increase development pressure along Rt. 27.

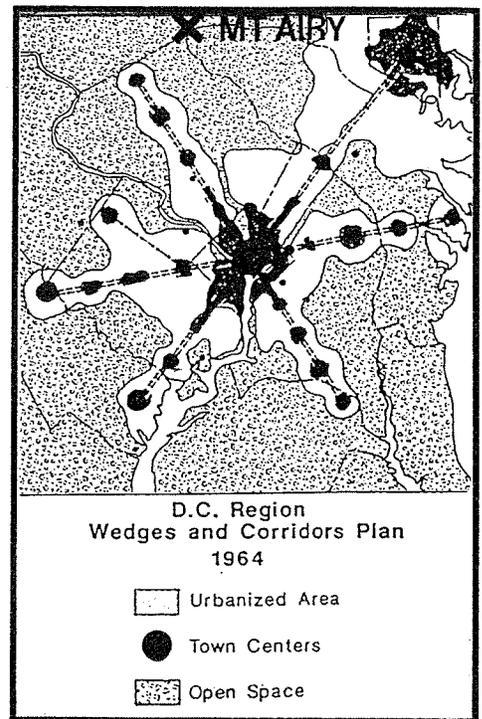


Figure 5: D.C. Wedges & Corridors Plan

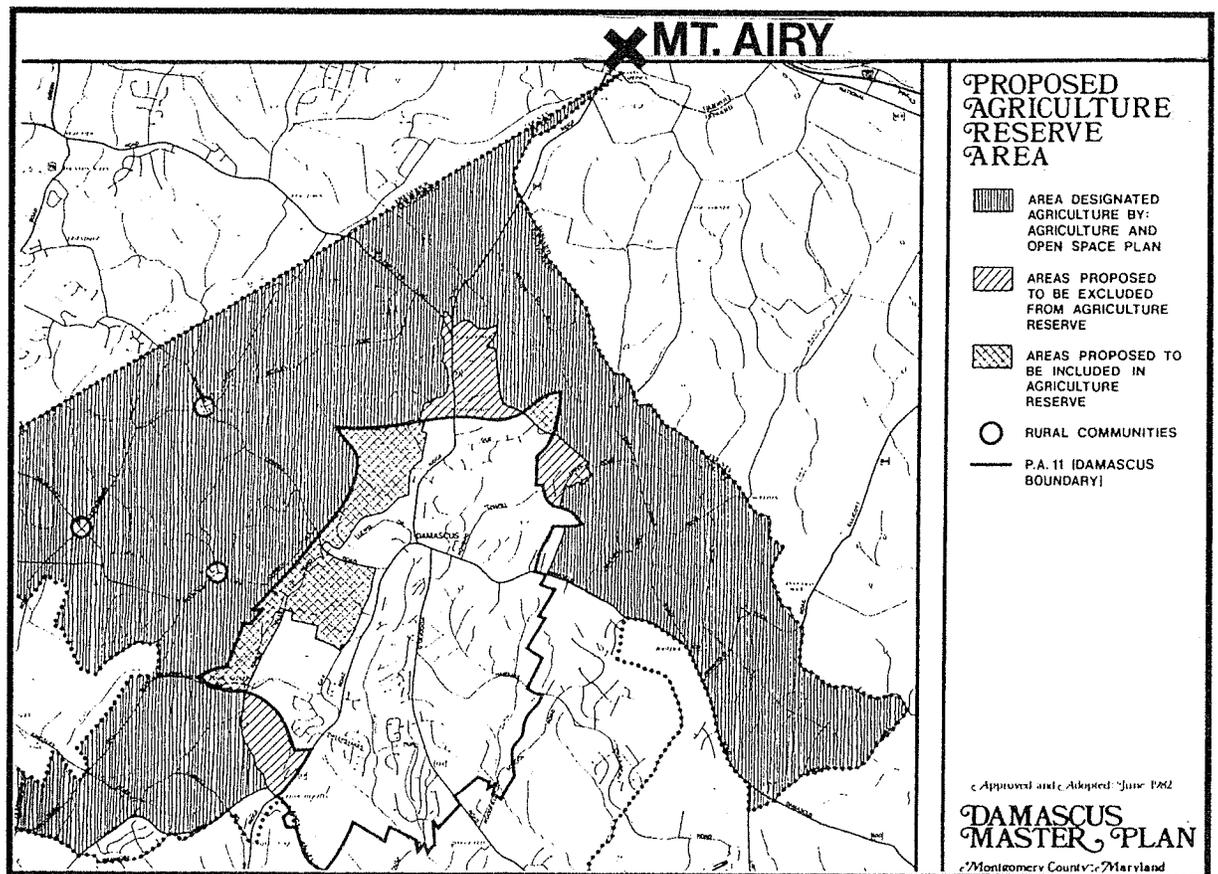


Figure 6: 1982 Damascus Master Plan, Montgomery County

Frederick County: Development activity outside the Town limits in Frederick County has been fairly common in the past 10 years. In Election District 18-1 alone the population was 5,789 in 1990. Of this, 1,544 persons live within Mt. Airy's town limits and 4,245 people in the immediate adjacent county area. Frederick County identified Mt. Airy as a Regional Community in their June 1990 Comprehensive Plan. This designation anticipates the development of comprehensive community and commercial facilities, excellent highway accessibility, and estimates an ultimate population of 5,000 to 15,000.

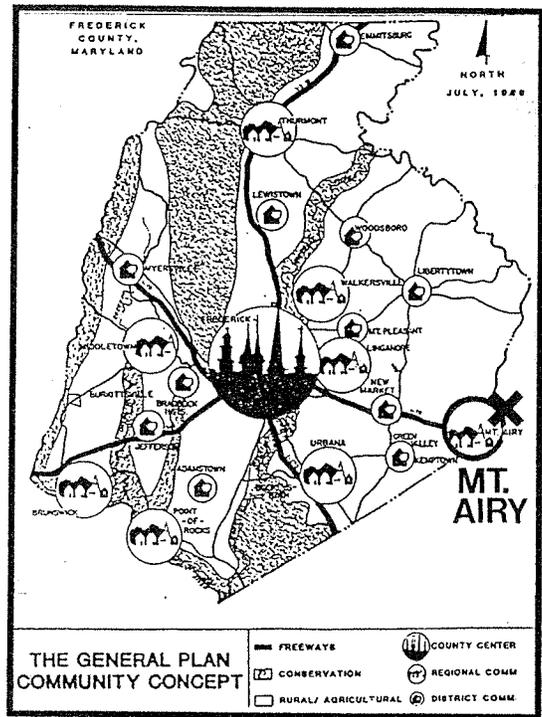


Figure 7: Frederick County Community Concept

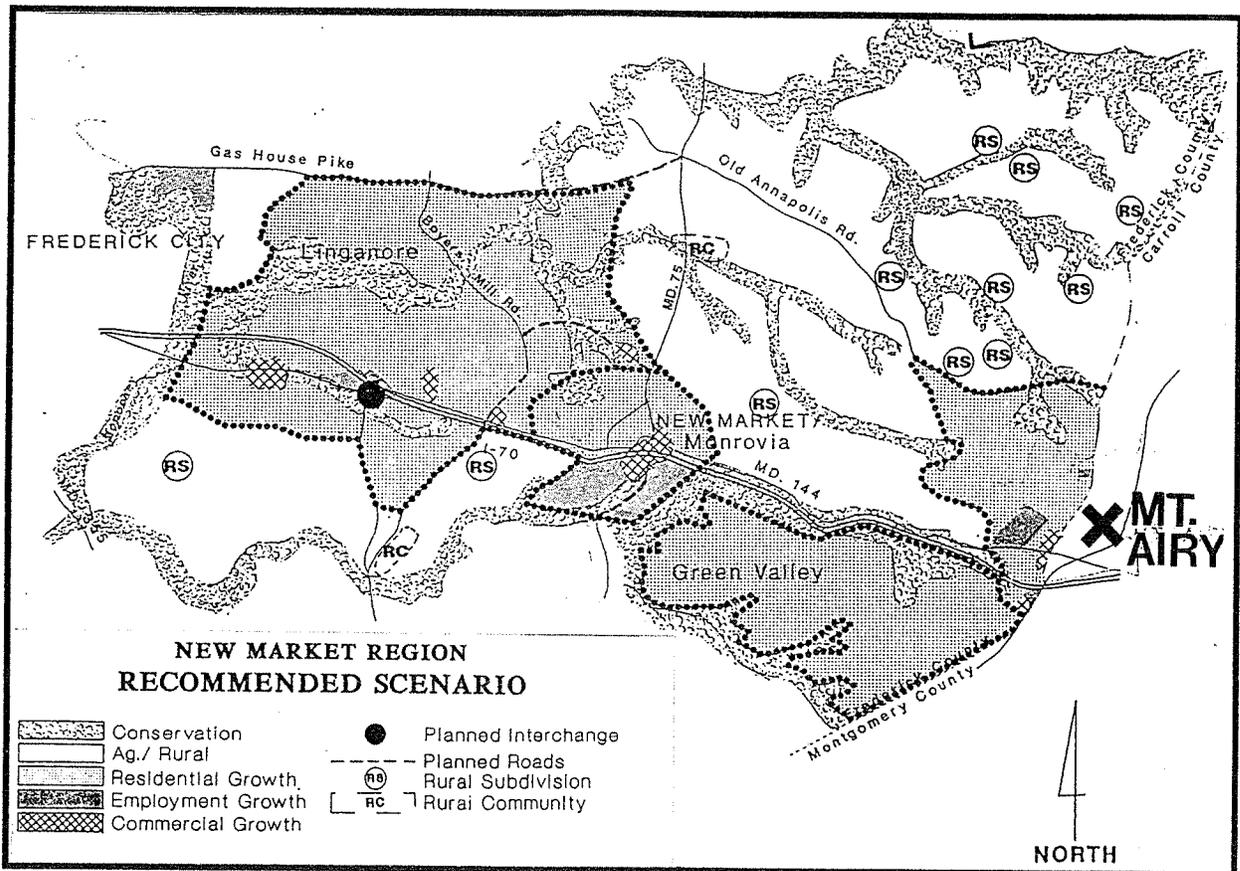


Figure 8: "New Market Regional Plan Update, Draft 1992"  
Frederick County Department of Planning and Zoning.

**Carroll County:** Carroll County's Master Plan attempts to concentrate development around existing communities. This is reflected in the 1982 Mount Airy and Environs Comprehensive Plan. Some areas immediately adjacent to Mt. Airy have been zoned for low-density residential development. Beyond this development zone, most property is zoned agricultural or conservation. Development around Mt. Airy has been controlled by its proximity to the planned Gillis Falls Reservoir. Carroll County has purchased a majority of property needed for the reservoir, and restricted the intensity of residential development around the reservoir to protect this water resource.

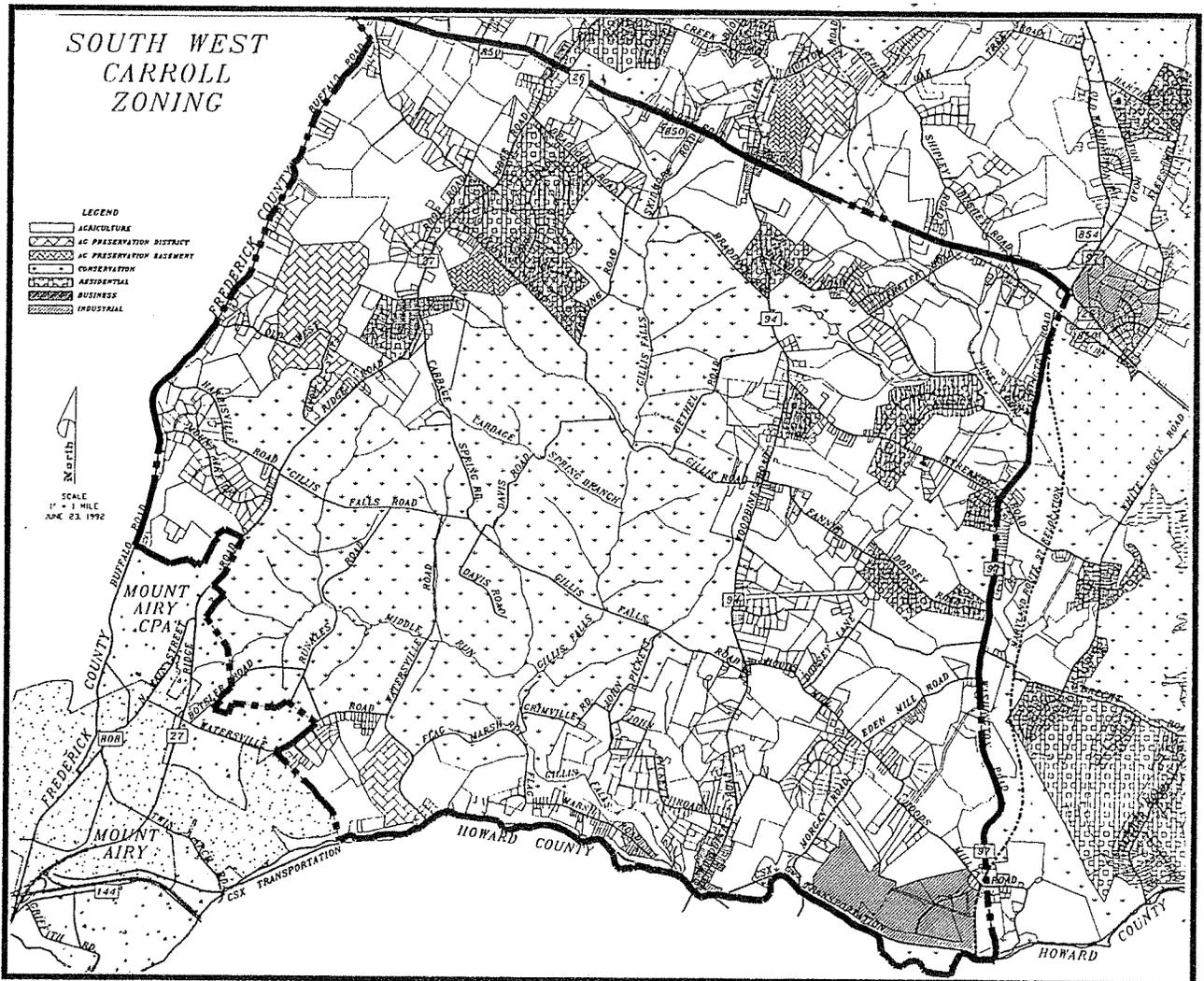
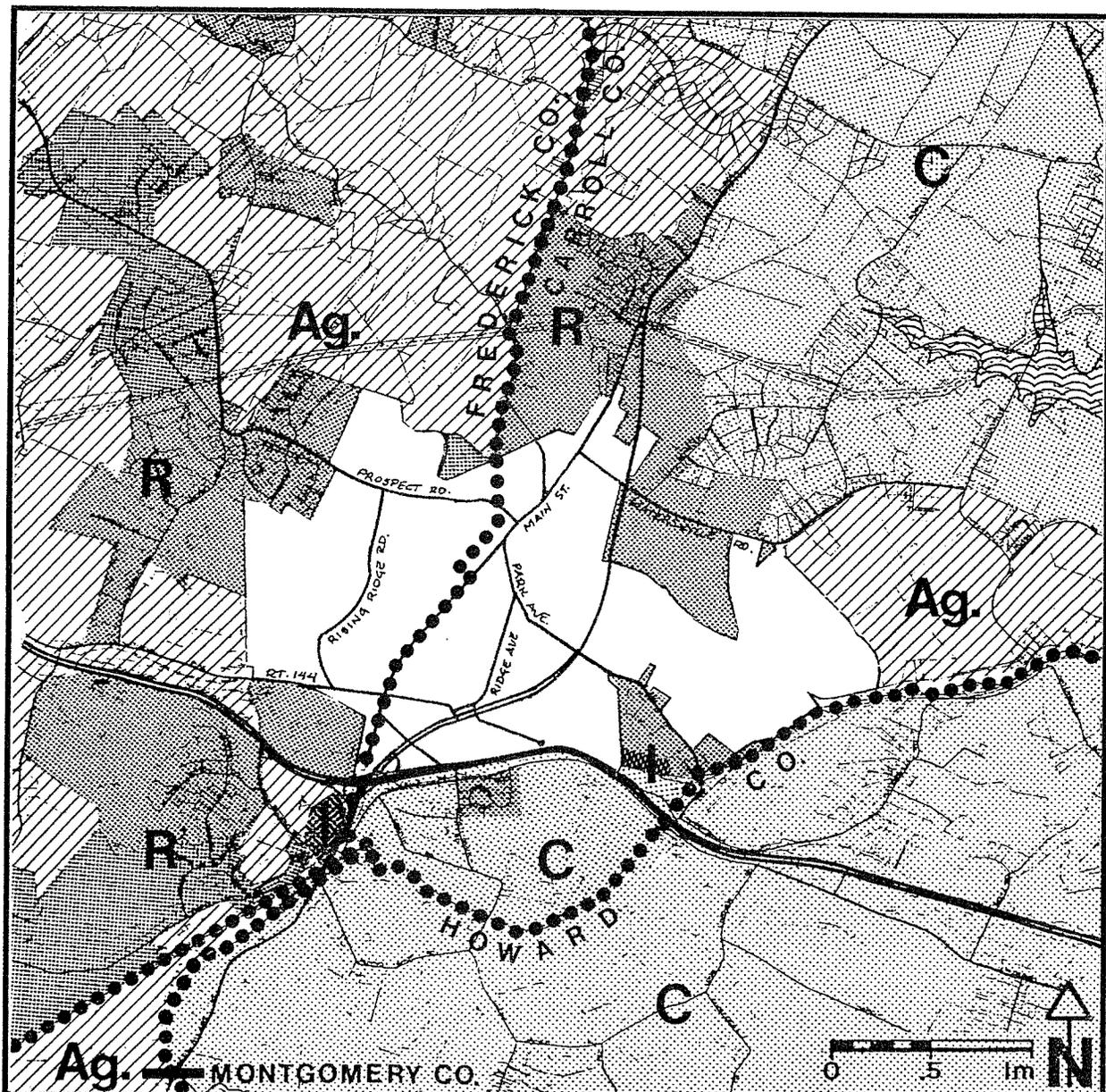


Figure 9: "Southwest Carroll County Comprehensive Plan, Goals and Directions, Draft 1, August 18, 1992"; Carroll County Department of Planning.

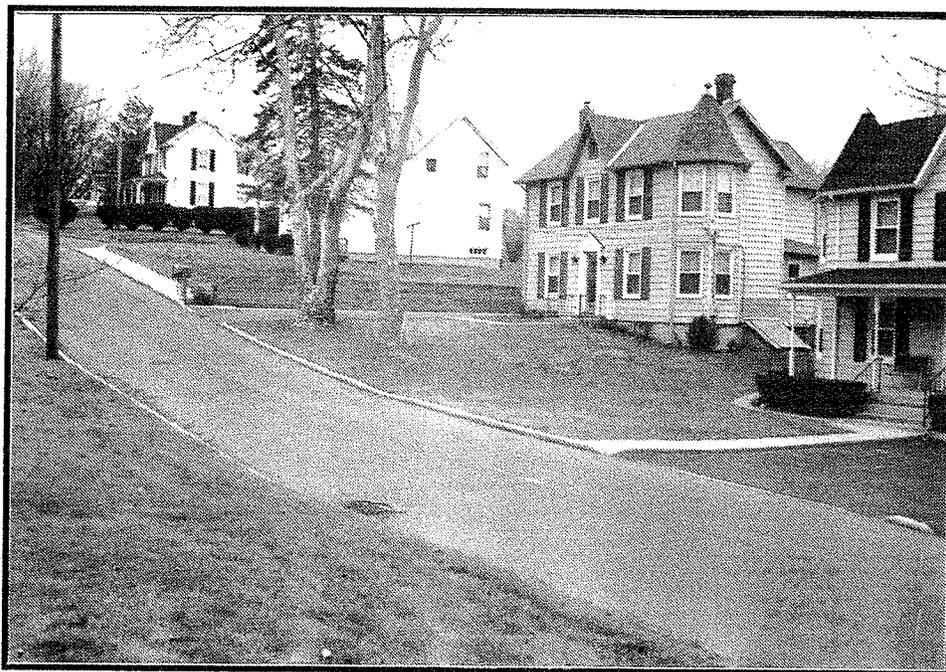


<u>County:</u>	<u>Current Zoning:</u>	<u>Permitted Development:</u>
Carroll	Ag - Agricultural C - Conservation R - Residential	1 lot / 20 acres 1 lot / 3 acres 1 lot / 1 acre
Frederick	Ag - Agricultural R - Residential	3 lots / 25 acres + 1 lot / 50 addtl. acres 1 lot / 1 acre
Montgomery	Ag - Agricultural	1 lot / 20 acres
Howard	C - Conservation	1 lot / 3 acres

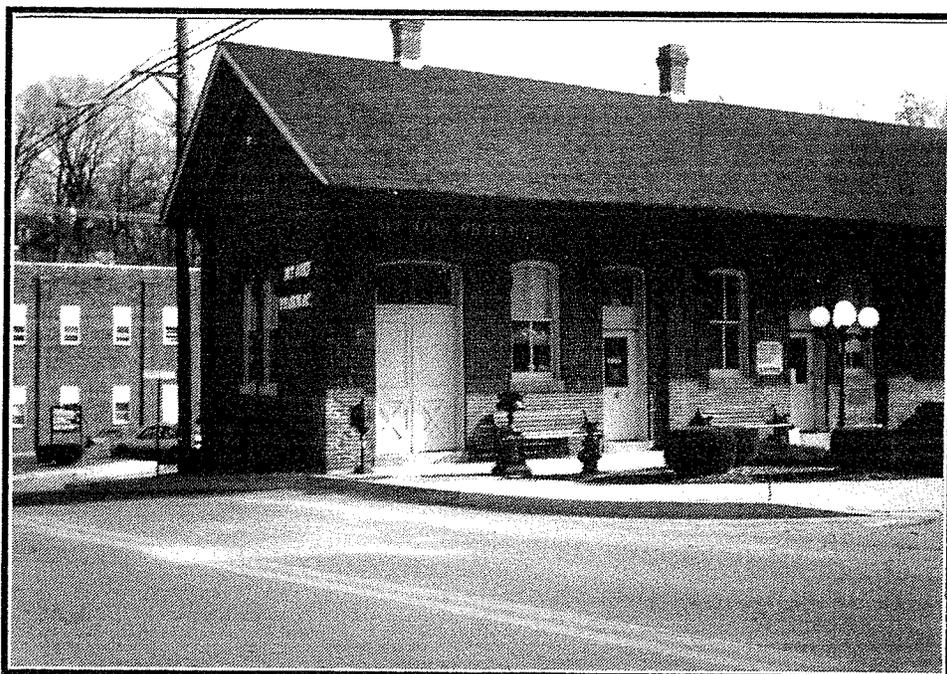
Figure 10: Surrounding County Zoning & Permitted Development

5. *Mt. Airy is a desirable community to live in, offering a small town atmosphere in contrast to the intense development closer to the metropolitan areas.*

It is not possible to quantify the extent to which Mt. Airy's character has attracted new residents, but it is easy to identify the qualities of the town. Mt. Airy still derives much of its physical identity from Main Street, the old town center, and the older neighborhoods. In addition, numerous civic and non-profit organizations enjoy large memberships, and their activities support strong community ties.



**Figure 11:**  
Dorsey Avenue

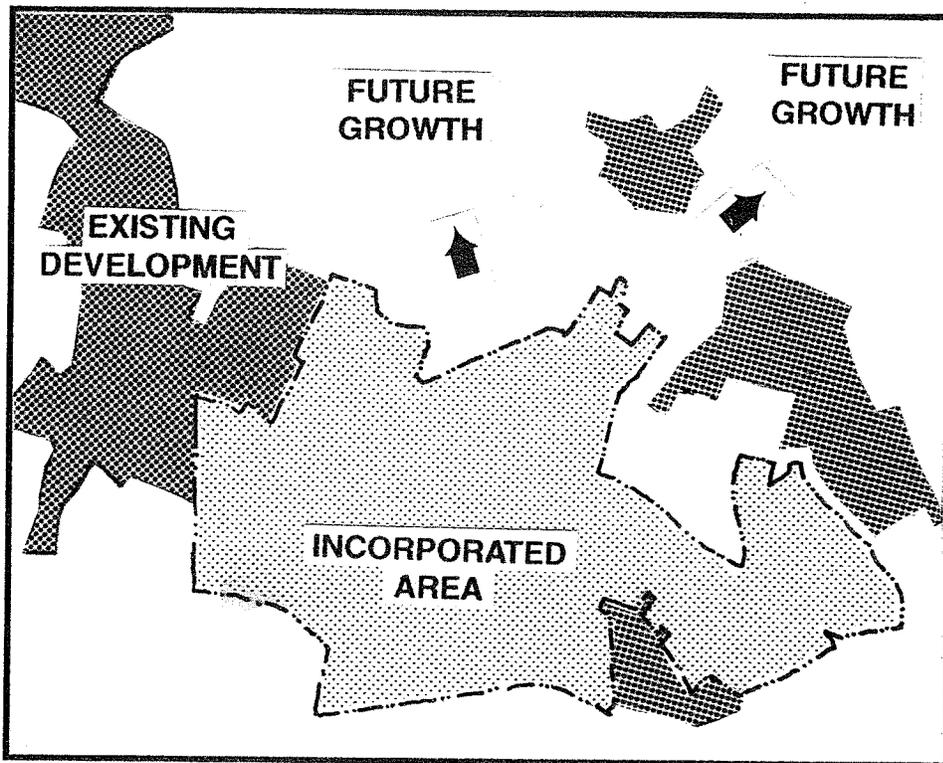


**Figure 12:**  
Mt. Airy Pharmacy  
(old train station)

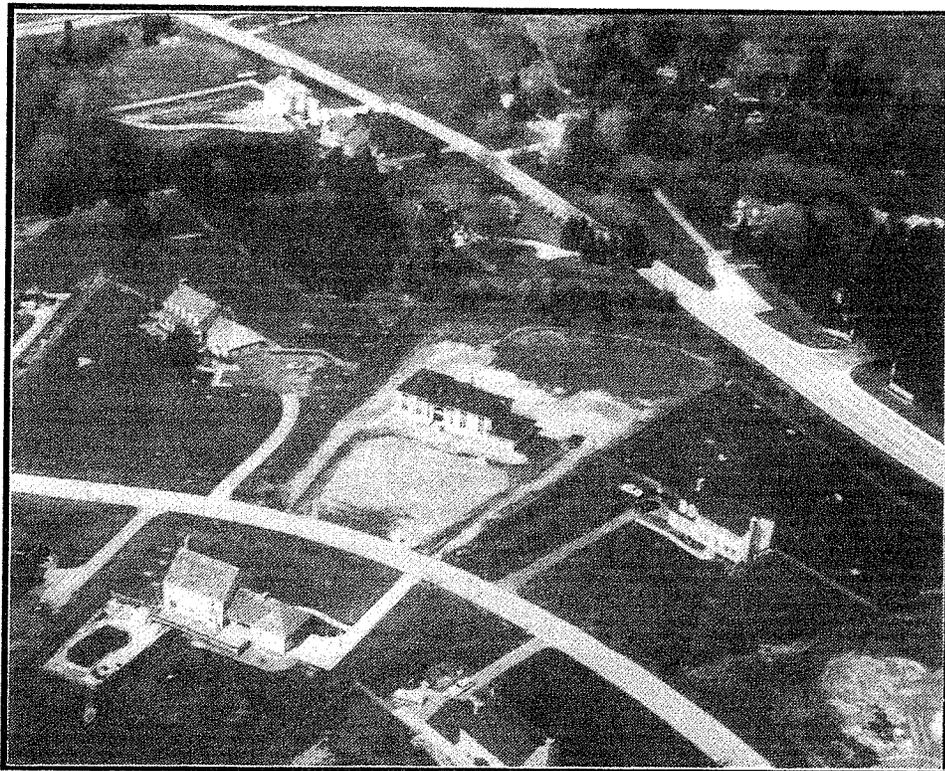
## B. NO GROWTH POLICIES AND PROBLEMS

Throughout the country no-growth movements have arisen in an attempt to avoid the negative effects of rampant growth, yet problems can result from no-growth policies. While these policies may prevent future annexations and development within municipal boundaries, pressure for development in surrounding areas is often proportionally increased, resulting in low-density development around the towns. The following impacts of low-density growth outside of municipalities largely negate possible benefits of a no-growth policy:

1. *Development outside municipal limits burdens local services without contributing to the Town's tax base.*  
Residents living immediately outside the Town use Town parks, roads, and other facilities, and place additional demands on fire, rescue and other services, but are not contributing to the tax base that supports these services. Growth outside of Town is felt directly when public facilities become overcrowded and services cannot keep pace with the demand because insufficient funds from the county are returned to support these provisions.
2. *Large sprawling residential developments compete with the Town for construction of county-funded public facilities.*  
Public facilities such as schools, libraries, parks and community centers are often partially or wholly funded by county government. As large areas of sprawling residential development occur outside established municipalities a demand is made to locate public facilities in these areas rather than within the existing communities. If Mt. Airy adopts a no-growth stance, additional sprawling development will be more likely around the Town. Already, development planned for the Green Valley area in the New Market Regional Plan can exceed the number of homes in the Frederick County portion of Mt. Airy, and these new residents will inevitably compete with the Town for county-funded facilities.
3. *Development outside a municipality becomes a boundary to orderly town growth.*  
No-growth policies often result in low-density development pockets outside of a town. In time these developments may restrict the normal expansion of municipal boundaries. If the well and septic systems in these developments are viable, there is little incentive for the property owners to request annexation into the town (which would allow them to hook up to a public water and sewer system.) As the town continues to expand it may surround these pockets of low-density development, complicating orderly expansion of infrastructure systems.



**Figure 13: Future Growth Patterns -** Orderly expansion of Town boundaries can be restricted by adjacent development in the surrounding counties.



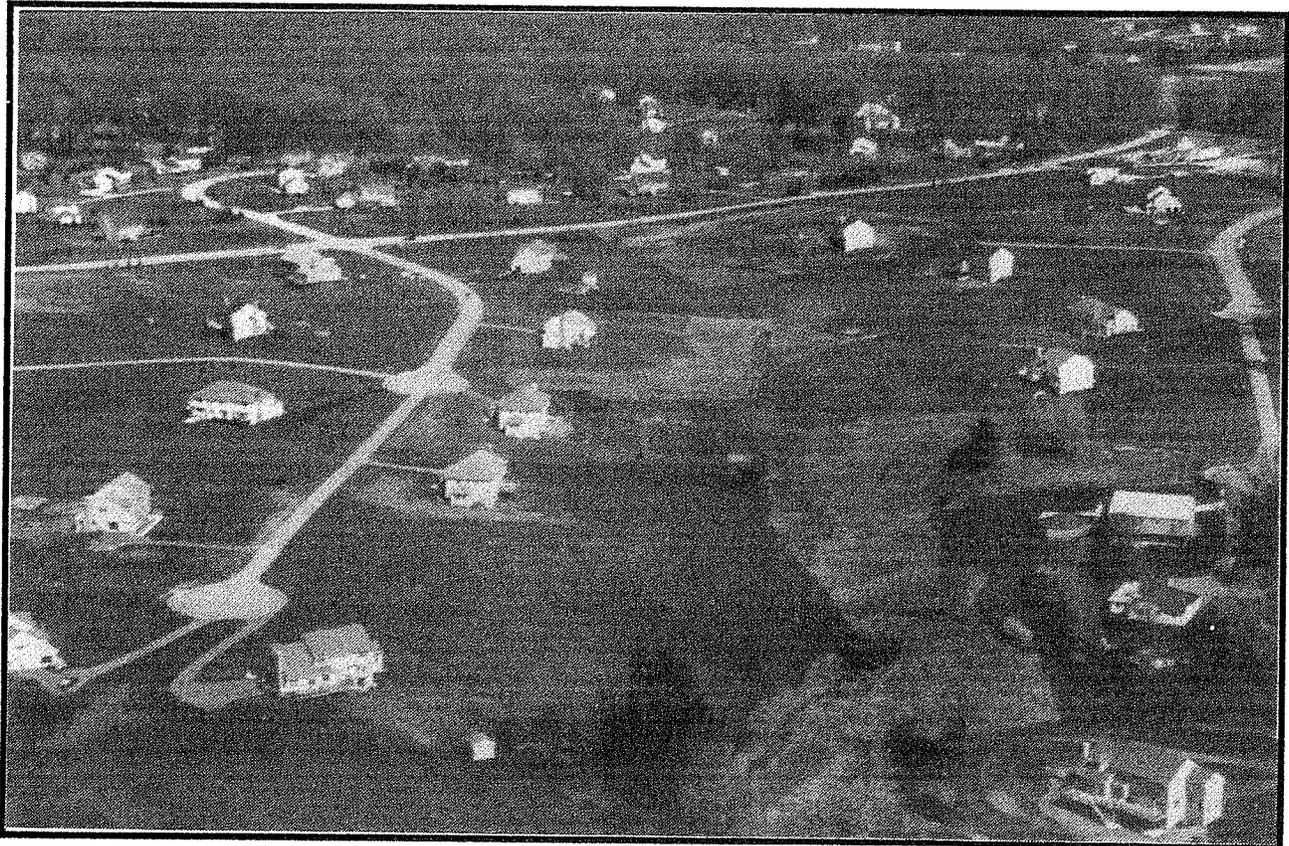
**Figure 14: Large-Lot Residential Development -** Large residential lots do not preserve farmland character, nor are they compatible with the scale and character of the Town.

4. *Development outside a municipality is subject to less input from the town planning and zoning authorities.*

The counties, although usually well informed on local issues, do not have a comprehensive understanding or a focused perspective on town matters. Development outside of a municipality is not required to consider the extension of the town's planned road network, exploration of well sites, parks and recreation provisions, and other issues that are routinely explored during the town development review process. The town would be better served by permitting development within its boundaries and controlling the phasing and planning process, than by attempting to prohibit development and, by default, permitting it to occur outside municipal boundaries and without direct town supervision.

5. *Development outside a municipality makes town boundaries indistinguishable.*

When development in the counties is located adjacent to the Town, it is difficult to distinguish the town boundaries. At one to three units per acre, residential development on what was open farmland is highly visible, and the "farmland" character is lost. These low-density developments can appear to blend in with adjacent 1/2 acre residential lots that are in the town. Not only does this confuse the town identity for visitors, but often residents who live in the counties think they live in the town. The community spirit is in part derived by a strong sense of belonging. When there are no identifiable town boundaries, a fundamental means of establishing a sense of belonging is lost.



**Figure 15: Aerial View of Large Lot Development**

### C. POLICIES TO ADDRESS REGIONAL GROWTH IMPACTS ON THE TOWN CHARACTER

Fundamental changes to the character of Mt. Airy that may result from uncontrolled regional growth involve the loss of a historically rural setting, the blurring of Town boundaries, and increased traffic on local streets. The Town must set policies to preserve the quality of life in advance of future growth. The following policies may help alleviate undesirable regional growth impacts.

1. *Accommodate regional traffic through Town with minimal conflict on local streets.*

Figure 16 illustrates the existing regional traffic patterns. Route 27 is the primary Main Street bypass and handles most commuter traffic from residential areas in Carroll County to employment centers in Montgomery County. Commuter traffic from Frederick County enters Town on Old Annapolis Road, (which changes its name to Prospect Rd. within town boundaries,) and travels south on Main Street.

There are two key problem areas: one at the intersection of S. Main St. and Rt. 144 (labeled "1"), and a second at Main Street and Prospect Rd. (labeled "2"). Neither Prospect Rd. nor Main Street are designed to safely carry the volume of traffic they currently handle. To alleviate this problem, Rising Ridge Road was planned to divert traffic from Prospect Rd. directly to Rt. 144. This bypass is under construction, however it will compound the problems at S. Main St. and Rt. 144.

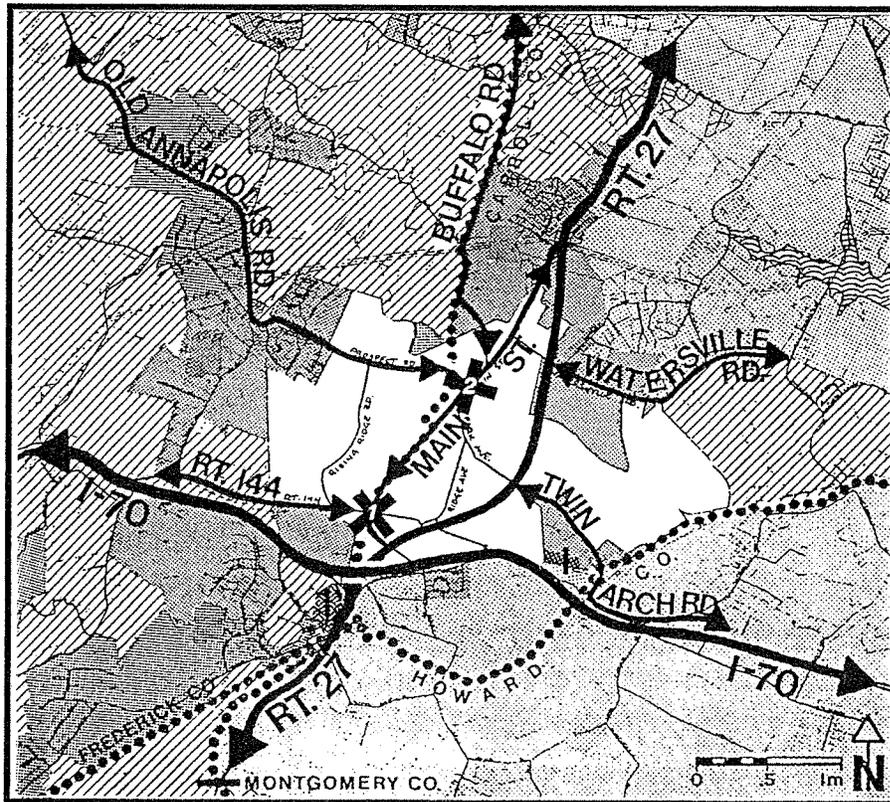


Figure 16: Existing Regional Traffic Patterns

Figure 17 illustrates two planned road extensions: one to directly address the intersection of Main St. and 144 (labeled A), and the other to facilitate direct movement from Old Annapolis Rd. to Rt. 27 north of Town (labeled B.) These are discussed as follows:

**A. Rising Ridge Road Extended:** A planned extension to Rising Ridge Road will connect it directly to Route 27. The Town commissioned a preliminary engineering study of this extension in 1988. While this is a short length of road, it traverses steep, wooded ground parallel to the railroad tunnel and will be fairly expensive to construct. This extension is necessary immediately and the Town should begin research work to facilitate it.

**B. Old Annapolis Road Extended:** A second bypass is planned to extend Old Annapolis Road to Route 27. The proposed alignment will connect into Candice Drive, which was originally designed and constructed for this purpose. This alignment crosses farmland within Frederick County. The Town would probably have to annex land up to this road alignment in order to facilitate the road construction by future development.

To help define the impact of regional traffic patterns on Town streets, information gathered as part of the Street Improvement Program discussed in Chapter V should include average daily traffic counts, congestion and accident records.

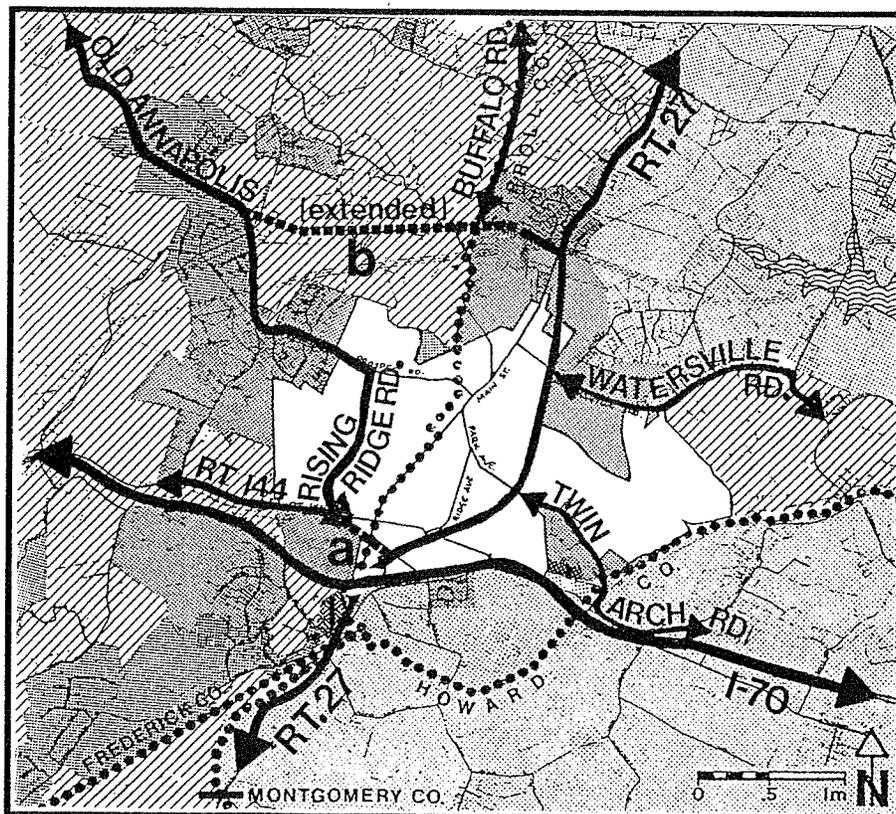


Figure 17: Proposed Regional Traffic Patterns

2. *Town boundaries should be identified and enhanced.*

The 1980 Master Plan Update set ultimate boundaries for the Town based on an expected cap in the population of 10,000 people. This figure was determined by the population that could be served when the sewer treatment plant would be expanded to 1.2 million gallons per day (mgd). Since 1982 new methods for treating wastewater have become available that are more efficient than current technology. Therefore a plant expansion may not be limited to an intake of 1.2 mgd. Other criteria may be used to determine town boundaries.

A town boundary indicates the limit or extent of property that is part of the community. Everything within the boundary "belongs" to the community. Older village and town boundaries were often distinguished by an abrupt transition from farmland to the closely spaced buildings of the town. The proximity of the buildings was necessary so that daily activities would be within easy walking distance of each other. As our society has become more auto-oriented, and development more spread out, it has become necessary to look for opportunities to establish identifiable town boundaries.

A town boundary can be a very effective "place-maker." It should have limits that are clear and attractive. Features such as ridge tops, streams or tree lines are recognizable natural boundaries. Roadways are effective man-made boundaries. Mt. Airy already has several established boundaries, such as the South Branch of the Patapsco River and I-70. However, in many areas boundaries have been or are being created that are haphazard and unrecognizable. Most often this occurs as a result of low-density development in the adjacent counties. Because this sprawling development is likely to continue to be permitted in the counties, it is necessary for the town to identify and actively protect the establishment of municipal boundaries. The following text refers to Figure 18, and discusses existing and proposed town boundaries.

Areas #1,4,5; Existing Development: Existing developments in Carroll and Frederick Counties close to the Town establish limits to growth and, by default, become town boundaries. Such development has replaced scenic farmland and is not similar to the scale of development within the Town. The property lines defining new developments do not usually follow visual or physical boundaries, such as ridge lines, streams or valleys. Development adjacent to the Town therefore obscures the definition of the community. The Town must accept these county developments as established boundaries given the improbability of annexation. The Town can initiate discussion with the surrounding counties to establish land-use policies that limit similar development outside the Town boundary.

Area #2; Town-Owned Property: This boundary is at the western edge of 88 acres the Town purchased in 1990 to secure a high-volume well discovered on the property. The Town intends to reserve this land for future public use. West of this boundary, the land is in Frederick County and is zoned Agriculture.

Area #3; Old Annapolis Road extended: Old Annapolis Road extended would be an appropriate boundary to the north-west. If this property were permitted to develop, the costs of the road construction could be partially funded by the development interests. In order

to establish an identifiable boundary, all property north of this boundary should remain in an agricultural zone. Development along the south side of this road should face the road, and a special landscape edge should be provided.

Area #6; The South Branch of the Patapsco River: The South Branch of the Patapsco River is both a jurisdictional and natural boundary. The river divides Carroll County from Howard County and the length of the river is heavily forested. The Town should encourage Howard County to extend its greenways plan to include the east side of the river, and Mt. Airy and Carroll County should protect forests on the west side of the river. The recreation trail outlined in the parks plan should make this area accessible for residents' enjoyment, and foster an awareness of this natural and historic resource.

Area #7; I-70: I-70 is a distinct physical and jurisdictional boundary. From I-70, the Mt. Airy water towers are visible behind a foreground of trees adjacent to the highway.

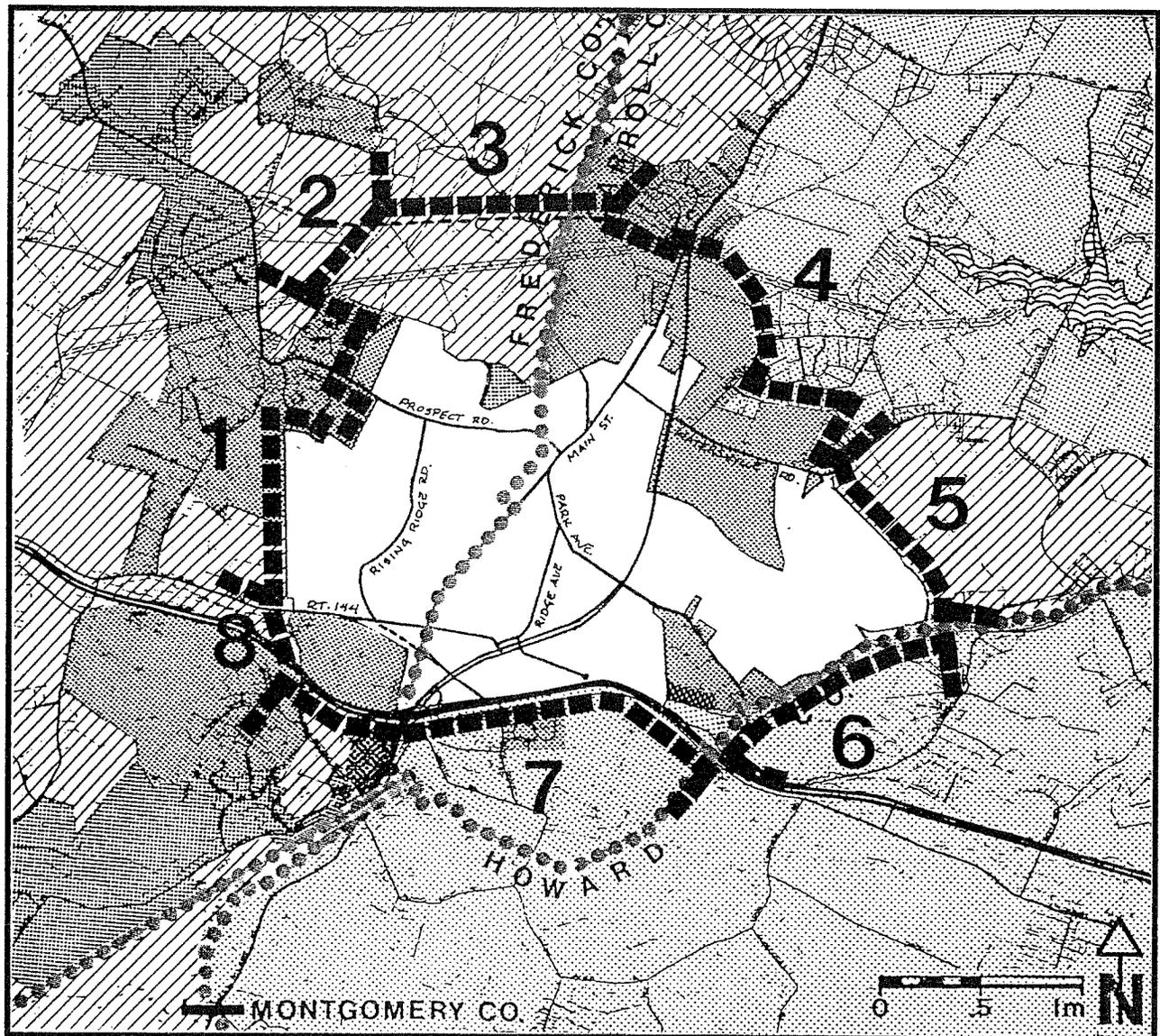


Figure 18: Ultimate Town Boundaries

The existing woods should be preserved and a landscape plan may be developed to further enhance this edge. Any development in Mt. Airy visible from I-70 should be required to implement the landscape plan.

3. *Protect remaining farmland at the edge of Town boundaries.*

The long views of rolling farmland are one of North Main Street's most memorable attributes. The surrounding farms are a daily reminder of Mt. Airy's history and provide the distinguished setting of the Town. While growth in Mt. Airy is imminent, it is necessary to preserve the farmland setting by permitting development to occur within a compact area defined by Town boundaries, and protecting the agricultural use of land outside of the Town boundary. Mt. Airy should support county efforts to maintain and strengthen agriculture and conservation districts around the Town.

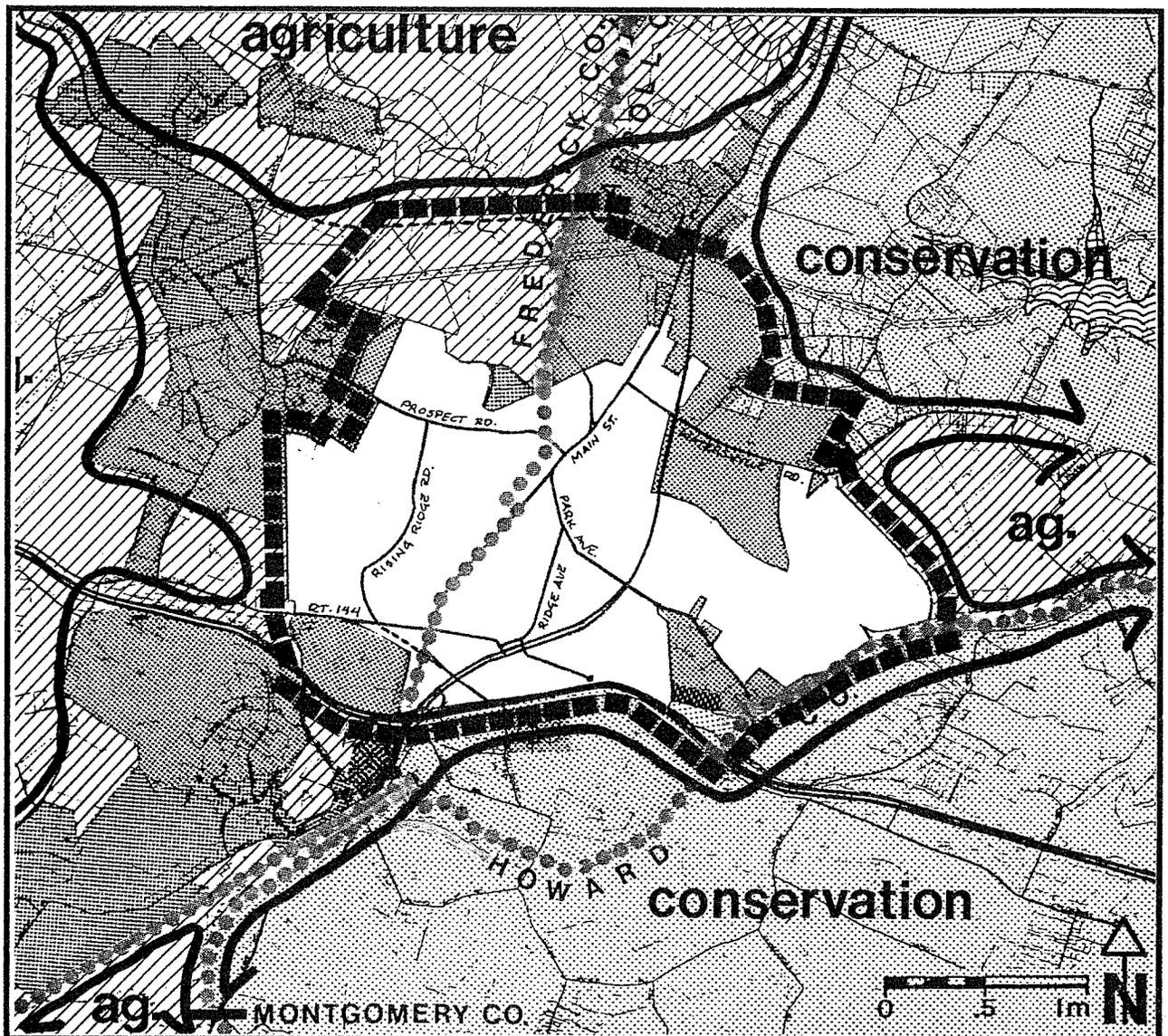


Figure 19: Surrounding Land-Uses Supported

4. Establish a "Gateways and Thoroughfares" Plan.

There are five historic roads that provide regional access to the Town and may be enhanced by a program of landscape improvements and "gateways." As these roads cross into Town limits, signage, landscape features, or other similar improvements can function as gateways to identify the Town and the historical value of these roads. To further enhance the historic road pattern, a street tree plan should be developed to encourage planting that will improve the beauty of these streets and the Town. This plan could be coordinated by a Town-sponsored committee and implemented by future development, Town-sponsored programs, and volunteer citizen groups.

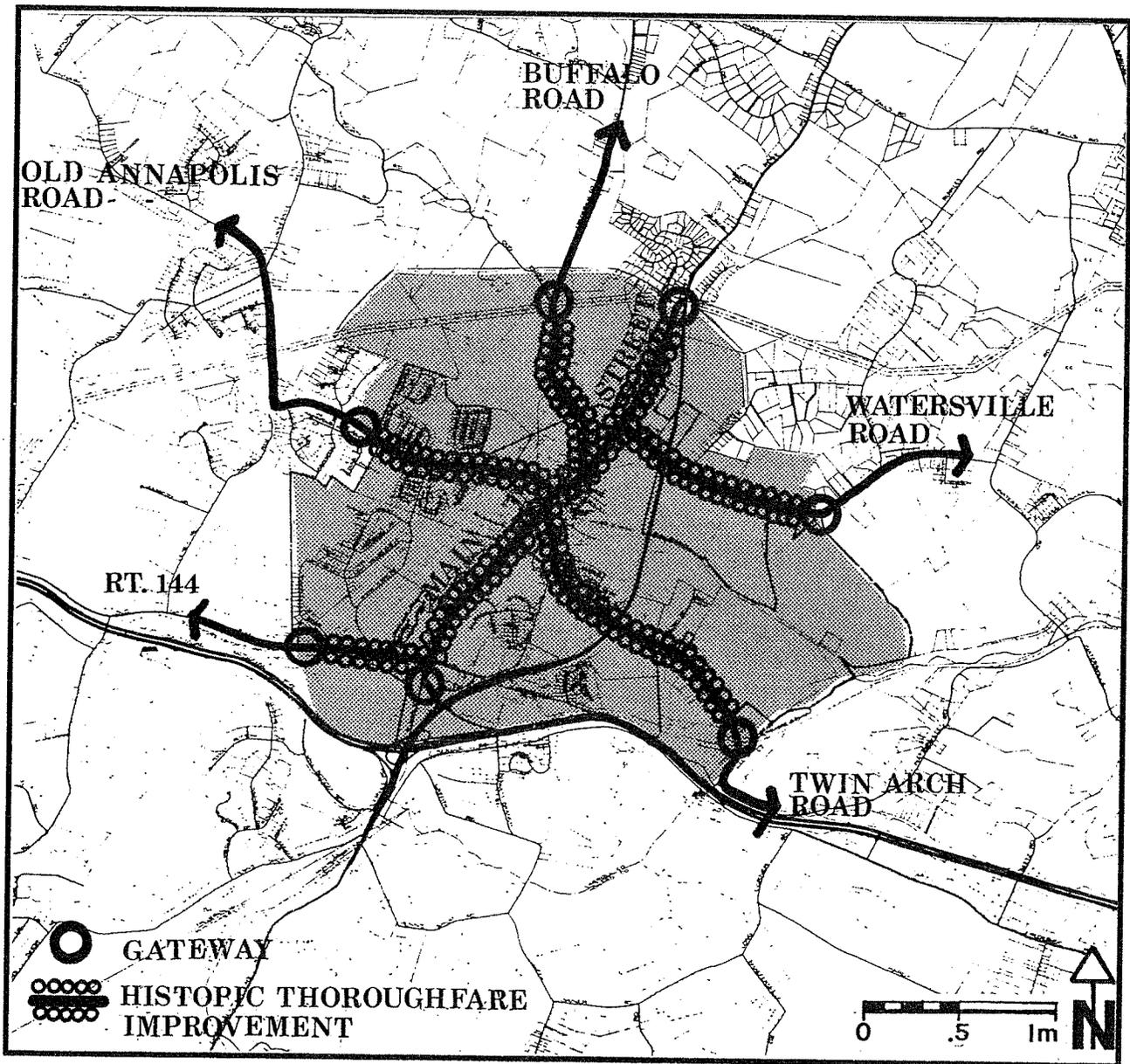


Figure 20: Gateways & Thoroughfares Plan

## D. SUMMARY

The Town of Mt. Airy and the surrounding region will continue to grow. Because of the Town's accessibility to the major highways and proximity to the cities of the "golden triangle," Mt. Airy will continue to feel residential development pressure. Mt. Airy could utilize its location to attract office and R&D development. No-growth movements may temporarily stall development, but in time these practices have been shown to compound the problems associated with uncontrolled growth. Methods for mitigating impacts of regional growth on the community character are proposed.

### Goals and Actions:

In order to better manage regional growth and its effects on the Town of Mount Airy, the Town will:

1. Take a leading role in discussions with all four counties regarding growth management in the Mount Airy Region. The Subcommittee on Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation formed at the direction of the 1992 Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act, may be able to assist in this effort.
2. Accept county policies that concentrate growth around existing centers, and therefore plan for growth.
3. Pursue opportunities to attract commercial and industrial development to provide a tax base necessary for balanced growth as a regional center.
4. Reach agreements with each county regarding the phasing of growth so that the Town is assured of county cooperation with the orderly growth policies of the Town, and the provision for adequate facilities and services.

In order to mitigate the impacts of regional growth on Town character, the Town of Mt. Airy will:

1. Maintain the Town limit defined by existing county development.
2. Encourage protection of farmland outside the proposed ultimate Town boundaries.
3. Accommodate regional traffic through Town with minimal conflict on local streets.
4. Identify and enhance Town boundaries.



Figure 21: Regionalism Policies



## II. PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

Research is underway to identify how development activity is affecting the natural ecosystem. In Maryland, this research has been pursued diligently to understand how we may improve the conditions of the Chesapeake Bay. While Mt. Airy is over 60 miles from the bay shore, stream tributaries that begin in Mt. Airy eventually empty into the bay. In an effort to coordinate environmental efforts across the State, and ultimately improve the condition of the Chesapeake Bay, the State has adopted several regulations requiring local governments to address specific environmental issues. Two of these laws, the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992, and the 1991 Forest Conservation Act, will directly affect planning decisions in Mt. Airy. In addition to these two state regulatory measures, the Town has independently addressed protection of steep slopes, floodplain, and town well watersheds. This chapter reviews these regulations, and explores the relationships between natural resource protection and land-use planning.

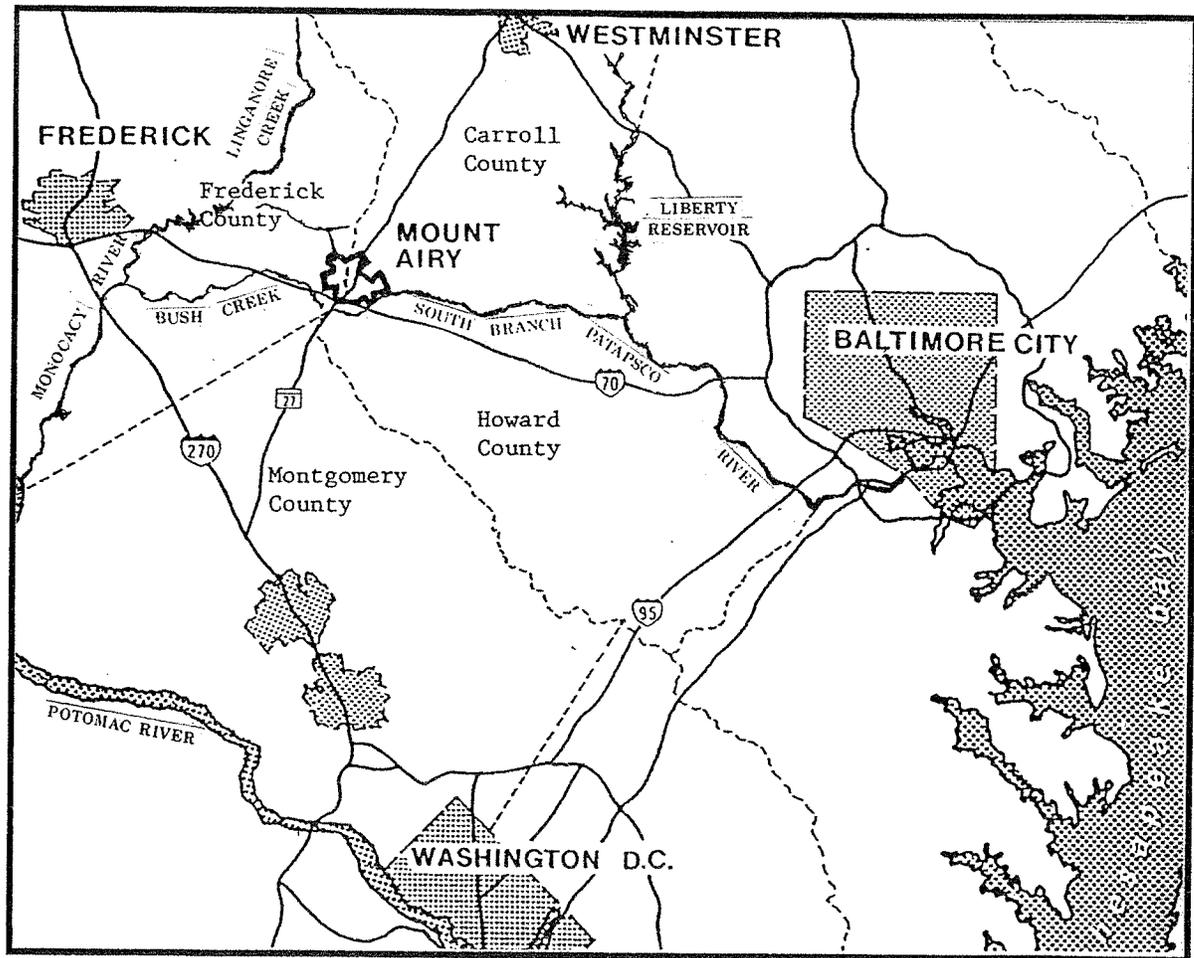


Figure 22: Stream Tributaries from Mount Airy to the Chesapeake Bay

**A. MARYLAND ECONOMIC GROWTH, RESOURCE PROTECTION,  
AND PLANNING ACT OF 1992 (hereafter referred to as the Planning Act.)**

*1. Introduction:*

The Planning Act set forth seven “visions” that the counties and municipalities are to adopt and implement through individual comprehensive planning processes. These visions are:

- 1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;*
- 2. Sensitive areas are protected;*
- 3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;*
- 4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;*
- 5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;*
- 6. To assure the achievement of 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined; and*
- 7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.*

The interpretation and implementation of these visions are left to local government so that they may be addressed as appropriate given unique local conditions.

Vision 1 may summarize the more specific goals of Visions 2-5, and all of the visions are interdependent. By concentrating development in suitable areas the protection of sensitive areas should be achieved. By directing new growth towards existing population centers undeveloped natural and agricultural resource areas are protected. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay would be achieved through protection of streams, floodplain, steep slopes, forests, and erodible soils, all of which should be considered “sensitive areas.” And last, as called for in Vision 5, conservation of resources would be achieved through adoption of all these policies.

It is not enough to simply address these goals through broad land-use policies. Vision 6 identifies the need to further review existing development regulations in order to coordinate the first five visions with an economic development policy. As is addressed later in this plan, existing zoning and subdivision regulations do not always produce aesthetically pleasing or environmentally responsible development. The complexity of some regulations and the lengthy development approval process both contribute to directing new development to less regulated areas. Chapter III, Enhancing the Public Realm, identifies areas where regulations may be streamlined so that they better achieve environmental, aesthetic, and economic development goals.

## 2. *Sensitive Areas:*

The Planning Act defines sensitive areas as streams and stream buffers, 100-year floodplain, endangered species habitat, and steep slopes. An evaluation of Mt. Airy's topography helps to describe the sensitive areas in the Town.

The Town of Mt. Airy developed along Main St., which follows the peak of Parr's Ridge. Parr's Ridge runs in a north-south direction and several minor ridges extend like fingers to the east and west. Between these minor ridges are small valleys in which the many branch streams surrounding the Town begin. Most land slopes at approximately 8-10%, and areas where slopes exceed 15% are common. Land areas within the 100-year floodplain are minimal, located mostly along low-lying stream beds. Similarly, few wetlands have been identified outside the stream valleys.

Less than a quarter mile south of Mt. Airy the South Branch of the Patapsco River begins at Parr's Spring. The Town limits extend east to the South Branch of the Patapsco River, which is the Carroll/Howard County border.

### 2a. *Streams and Stream Buffers:*

The protection of streams is often regulated by requiring undisturbed, vegetated stream buffers. Vegetated buffers can slow the flow of stormwater, reducing the erosion of stream banks. Vegetation also absorbs water and acts as a "filter" for pollutants and nutrients. By slowing the flow of rainwater, buffers allow the water temperature to moderate before entering streams, reducing shock to aquatic species. Stream buffers provide other benefits as well, including improved wildlife habitat and scenic value in developed areas.

The Town of Mt. Airy currently does not restrict development along streams, although where wetlands exist a 25-foot undisturbed buffer is established. Several "models" exist by which an appropriate stream buffer could be established. Rather than establish a uniform buffer width for all streams, most models recommend that a buffer width be established to accomplish specific goals. For instance, a review of studies conducted nationwide finds that to reduce the level of phosphorous entering streams, a 300-foot buffer on each side of the stream is necessary. However, if the goal is a reduction of sedimentation of the stream, a 100-foot buffer may suffice.

The effectiveness of a buffer is determined by many factors, including the steepness and length of slope within the buffer, the type of vegetative cover, the soil erodibility, and the presence of impervious surfaces, (such as pavement or rooftops.) Acknowledging these variables, Baltimore County has established stream buffer regulations that consider each of these factors on a site-specific basis to determine required buffer widths.

The Carroll County study's final recommendation called for a 300-foot buffer around a water supply, and a 100-foot buffer for all other tributaries: however, in calculating the buffer, impervious surface area and slopes exceeding 25% do not count towards the buffer width requirement.

Recommended Action: Mt. Airy should review the Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards for stream buffers, and plan to adopt these or similar protective standards appropriate to the Town. Land-use policies around streams, particularly the South Branch of the Patapsco River and its tributaries, should be respectful of water resource protection.

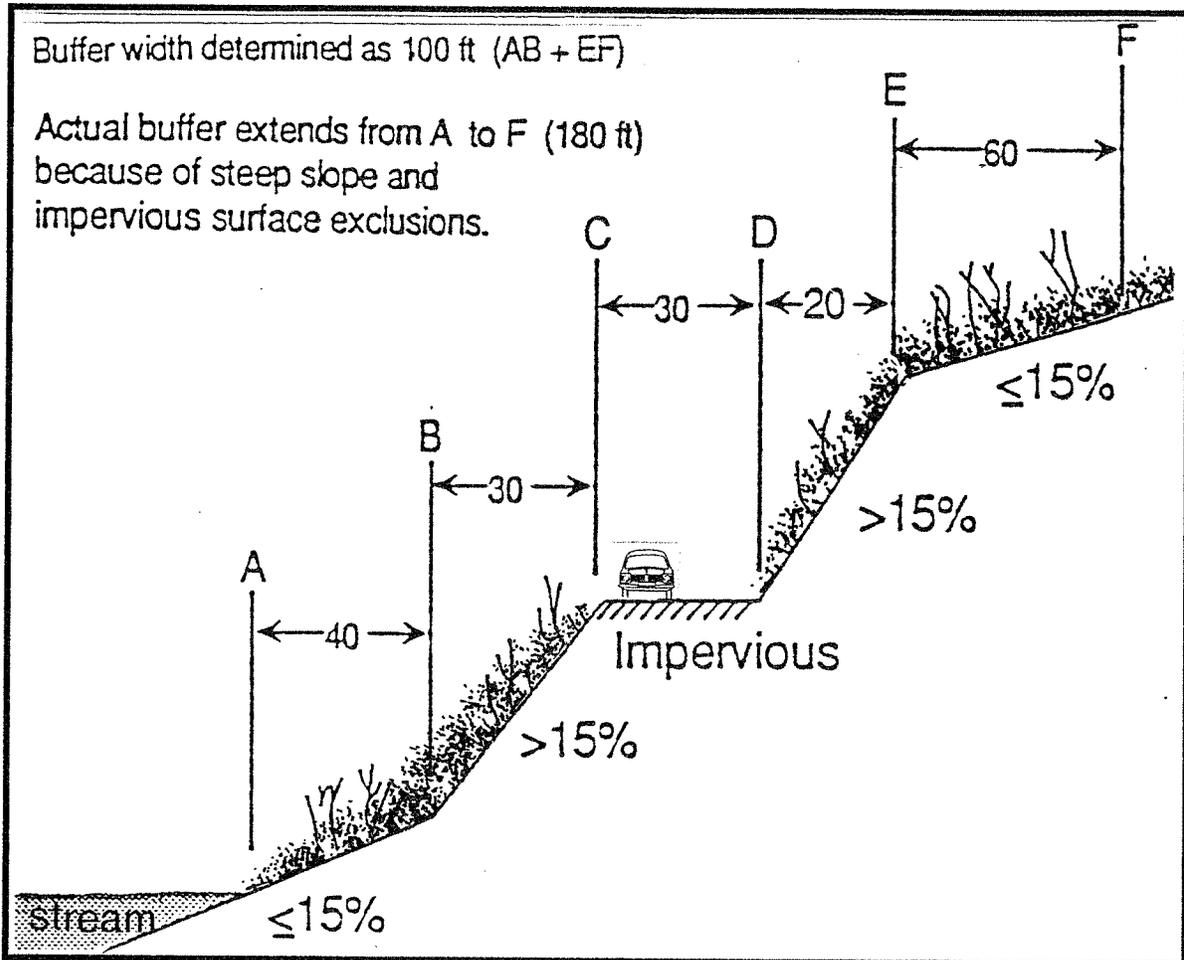


Figure 23: Stream Buffer Width Calculations

2b. 100-Year Floodplain:

Mt. Airy does not permit development within the 100-year floodplain in accordance with Section 2.6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

2c. Endangered Species Habitat:

No endangered species have been identified in or near Mt. Airy. If such information becomes known, the Town should take prompt and appropriate action to protect the endangered species habitat. In an effort to preserve habitat, 300-foot wide forested buffers should be encouraged where practical and beneficial to wildlife. Land-use policies, parks planning, and forestation resulting from the Forest Conservation Act should contribute to enhancement of these corridors.

Figure 24: Topography



Figure 25: Natural Features



## 2d. Steep Slopes:

Mt. Airy does not permit development on slopes equal to or greater than 30%. Many regulations referenced define steep slopes as being between 15 and 25%, and some regulations also consider the soil type in order to better determine erodibility. The State Forest Conservation Act defines steep slopes as greater than 25%, or slopes greater than 15% with a K value (soil erodibility) of greater than .35. It is difficult to develop at any density on slopes in excess of 15% without significant grading.

Recommended Action: It is recommended that the Town repeal the current steep slope definition and adopt, as a minimum, the definition of the Forest Conservation Act to establish consistency between regulations and permit less development on steeply sloping sites. Once revised zoning categories are adopted, the Town should inventory the slopes and soil types in and around the town. Concurrently the town should study how typical development in each zoning category can be applied to sloping sites, and suggest maximum slopes that can be reasonably developed. Based on the findings, the Town may continue to enforce the steep slope definition of the Forest Act or may choose to adopt more stringent regulations. The Town may also establish policies to guide land-use decisions made through the comprehensive rezoning, individual rezoning requests, or annexation petitions based on steep slope restrictions.

## B. FOREST CONSERVATION ACT

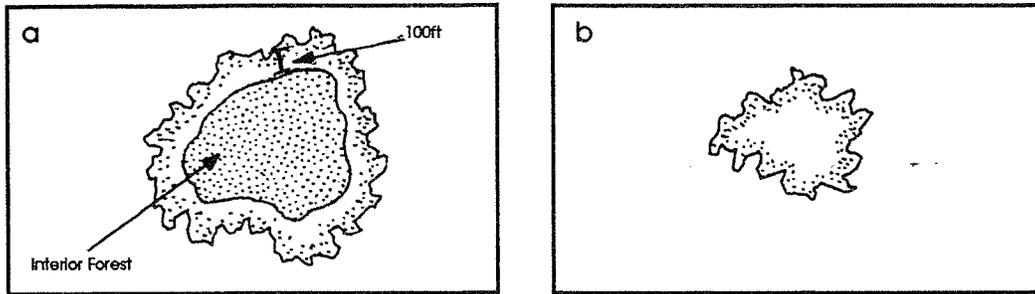
In 1991 Maryland adopted the Forest Conservation Act which provides that forest retention, reforestation and/or afforestation be required of new land development. This legislation allowed local governments to develop their own programs provided they met the intent of the State law. Mt. Airy agreed to work with Carroll County to develop a program particularly suited to this area, and this program became effective January 1, 1993.

The program drafted for Carroll County stresses retention of existing forest area as the primary objective. For every square acre of forest removed the same amount will have to be replaced (reforested) on-site or somewhere within the same jurisdiction. Afforestation, establishing a forest where there is none, was also required to meet the State objective of increasing forest cover in the State. Any development property that has less than 20% of it's land in forest cover must afforest up to 20%. Industrial and commercial land are permitted a slightly lesser criteria, requiring a minimum of 15% of the post-development land to be forested. To guide forestation decisions, priority retention areas and priority forestation areas are defined as including stream buffers, steep slopes, wildlife corridors, and similarly valued natural areas.

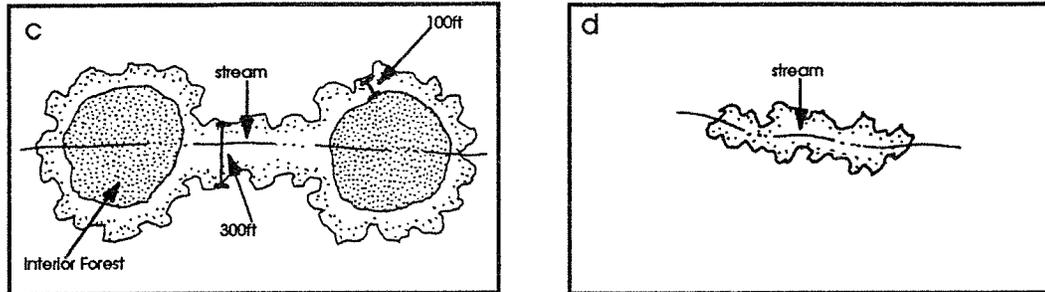
Recommended Action: The requirements of the Forest Conservation Act will contribute to the protection of "sensitive areas" outlined in the 1992 Planning Act. The Town should develop a plan identifying priority forestation areas to guide development in a coordinated direction. When development cannot reforest or afforest on their own property, the Town should also make available a list of either public or consenting privately-owned lands that would be appropriate for forestation.

## Forest Shapes and Functions

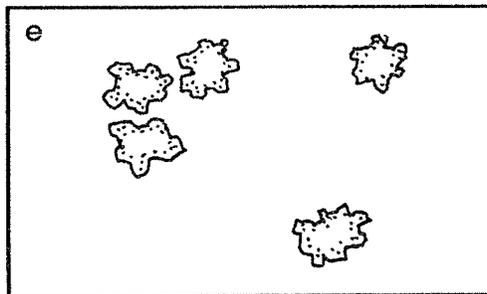
The following figures are generalizations of what one might find in forests. Scale is for comparison purposes unless indicated otherwise.



While a has enough interior forest to support interior dwelling wildlife and to discourage the movement of disturbed edge floral species inward, b depicts a forest that is too small to contain a true interior habitat.



C above, with a corridor of 300 feet, provides both good water quality protection and a good corridor for maintaining native forest species within adjacent interior stands as well as wildlife movement. d, however, is too thin to serve any of these purposes. It may create a visual buffer between differing land uses but it provides no noise buffer.



If retaining three fragments from the above five, it is better retain closely spaced fragments and target adjacent areas for afforestation.



**Figure 26: Forest Shapes & Functions**

Source - 1991 Forest Conservation Manual, prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources

## C. GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

The quality and quantity of groundwater are particularly important to the Town since it relies entirely on groundwater for its water supply. Because supply wells are generally located within Town boundaries, land surrounding Town wells is subject to a higher density of development than land in either county. Development affects water quality due to introduction of impervious surfaces, mass grading which removes existing vegetation, concentration of pollutants into single high-volume drainage areas (stormwater management ponds), and potential application or spill of chemicals that are not naturally absorbed or filtered. Common sources of contamination include salt from road de-icing, excessive fertilizer and pesticide application, and septic tank failures.

The following section outlines water resource management standards developed by the Carroll County Bureau of Water Resources, the relationship between water resource management and the master plan, and recommends revisions to current regulations.

### 1. *Water Resource Management Ordinance:*

Carroll County Bureau of Water Resources Management developed water resource standards with the assistance of R. E. Wright Associates Inc. that address surface and groundwater quality and quantity protection. In addition, the County retained Horsley, Witten and Hegemann, Inc. to review the standards for compatibility with the County Master Plan. The Water Resource Management Standards, Criteria, and Administrative Procedures prepared by R. E. Wright Associates, Inc. proposed performance standards and management criteria for four primary water resource areas:

- a. *"Carbonate rock areas"* are porous rock layers that usually contain a great volume of water but are highly susceptible to contamination. No carbonate rock is found in Mt. Airy.
- b. *"Wellhead protection areas"* include the land area estimated to drain towards and feed the well.
- c. *"Aquifer recharge areas"* include all area within the Community Planning Area and outside land that drains into the Community Planning Area. The Community Planning Area is the area within and adjacent to a municipality in which growth is directed.
- d. *"Surface watershed"* areas are surface areas that drain to proposed or existing water supply reservoirs, stream intakes, and the streams that feed them.

The proposed standards for the four management areas address pertinent issues for the respective areas, including nutrient management, groundwater extraction practices, groundwater recharge preservation, stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and chemical storage, usage and application.

Recommended Action: The proposed Water Resource Management Standards, Criteria and Administrative Procedures are thorough in content and would be a valuable asset in protecting the quality and quantity of Mt. Airy's water resources from the impact of new development. The standards, however, are necessarily complex and the Town may have to rely on County staff to administer them. It is recommended that the Town consider adopting the County proposed standards when they are adopted by Carroll County, and review workable administrative procedures. The Ordinance could also be adopted by the Town with modifications to address only those issues that pertain to the Town of Mount Airy.

2. *Water Resource Management Standards and the Master Plan:*

The Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards/Master Plan Compatibility Study prepared by Horsley Witten and Hegemann, Inc. reviewed the relationship between the proposed standards and their conflict or consistency with planning and zoning policies. If planning policies and regulations are not respectful of water resource issues, the success of water resource standards would be limited. The following recommendations apply to Mt. Airy:

2a. *General Land Use Recommendations:*

While contamination is a potential threat regardless of the land use, residential and commercial land uses are less likely than industrial uses to cause groundwater contamination from hazardous material accidents. However, increased nutrient loads and reduced groundwater recharge can result from intense development of any land use within a community well watershed. Water quality problems include excessive nitrate levels from residential and agricultural fertilizers and business wastewater, and phosphorus which is a result of surface run-off from residential, commercial and agricultural uses.

Recommended Action: Where excessive phosphorus or nitrates exist or are projected to exist, master planned land-uses and densities are recommended to be revised to more compatible uses. The Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards/Master Plan Compatibility Study provides appropriate information on which to base future land-use decisions.

2b. *Industrial Development:*

The threat of groundwater contamination from leaks and spill due to industrial activities can be significant. The study recommends that existing community wells located within industrial zoned areas be abandoned or relocated, existing and future industrial areas be subject to water resource management standards, and that future planning locates industrial activity outside potential community well watersheds.

Mt. Airy has two wells whose watersheds include industrial land: PW-6 and PW-7. PW-6 is located approximately 1500 feet from current industrial uses and is within a large undeveloped land area owned by Carroll County. PW-7 is a new well that is located in the yet undeveloped Mt. Airy Industrial Park. It is recommended that both wells be carefully

Figure 27: Water Resource Management Areas

back of Figure 27

monitored, and future businesses within the watersheds be advised of activities that may impact the well.

Recommended Action: With the exception of Mt. Airy Industrial Park and future development along the extension of Center Street, no industrial uses are planned within current community well watersheds. The comprehensive plan and any future rezoning should consider limiting additional industrial development within these watersheds. In addition, the Town should consider adoption of proposed Water Resource Management Standards that address monitoring and clean-up of hazardous materials on industrial sites.

3. *Wellhead Protection Areas:*

Carroll County's proposed water resource management standards require a 100-foot undisturbed buffer around community wells. The purpose of a buffer area is to ensure adequate time delay before contaminants could reach a well. The Horsley, Witten and Hegemann, Inc. study explains that the buffer area should be sized according to the potential draw of the well, and most wells draw from an area larger than 100 feet. A well pumped at higher volumes will draw from a larger area over the same period of time than a lesser pumped well. The U.S. EPA recommends a 325-foot buffer around potential well sites.

Recommended Action: If Carroll County's proposed Water Resource Management Standards do not increase the buffer zone accordingly, Mt. Airy may consider adopting the U.S. EPA recommended buffer.

4. *Mt. Airy Ordinance No. 1989-2 - Responsibility of developers to provide new water source:*

In 1989 Mt. Airy adopted an ordinance that requires new development to find a significant well within their project, or pay a fee in lieu into a well exploration fund. Following adoption of this ordinance, several good wells have been found. However the new wells may be located within the development regardless of the proposed density or permitted land-use.

Recommended Action: The ordinance should be amended to require that high-density residential, commercial and all industrial developments must pay the well exploration fee or prove that a proposed well on the site will not be subject to contamination from the anticipated use of the development site.

5. *Stormwater Management:*

Stormwater management facilities are an attempt to replace the natural network for rain-water travel and filtering in developed areas. Stormwater runoff is conveyed to a stormwater management facility via sheet flow, a storm drain pipe system or another method of conveyance. Once the runoff reaches the facility, its release rate and quality can be managed.

There are various types of stormwater management facilities designed primarily to control

the increased volume or rate of runoff and/or eliminate pollutants that result from rainfall on developed areas. Stormwater management structures help avoid the sudden flow of stormwater into streams, and thereby reduce the risk of erosion and sediment deposit. Stormwater management facilities also help prevent large volumes of runoff from damaging downstream properties. Another primary function of many stormwater management facilities is pollutant removal. In addition, stormwater management facilities often facilitate infiltration of surface water to replenish Mount Airy's groundwater (drinking water) supply.

Although stormwater management facilities provide many benefits, problems relating to these facilities persist. Because facility design concentrates runoff in one location, there may be an increased loading of pollutants or nutrients at that location. The best way to minimize this loading is to provide as much natural vegetated surface area as possible throughout each new development. Vegetation will help treat pollutant laden runoff. Stormwater management facilities also require substantial maintenance, which is typically provided by the Town at taxpayer expense within low-density residential developments.

Recommended Action: The proposed Carroll County Water Resource Standards propose several methods to reduce the need for stormwater management facilities. One such recommendation is the use of open section roads wherever feasible to allow runoff to be absorbed along the entire perimeter of the road. This would provide a much greater surface area for infiltration than a centralized stormwater management facility could provide. There are many other ways to reduce runoff, but most require modifications to current zoning and subdivision regulations. All options should be considered, and those deemed feasible should be encouraged.

#### 6. *Gillis Falls Reservoir:*

In 1988 the Carroll County Bureau of Water Resources released a study including estimates of water supply and demand in the south Carroll County area. This Water Resources Study concluded that water demand would exceed supply by the year 2015.

To plan for future water demands, Carroll County has been planning for a surface water source, the Gillis Falls Reservoir, which is located approximately 2 miles north-east of Mt. Airy. The County has already purchased approximately 90% of the land needed for the reservoir. However, an alternative analysis suggested that Gillis Falls reservoir should not be considered as the primary future supply for the south-County area as other more preferable alternatives may be available. This study, by Black & Veatch, ranked the alternatives as follows: 1.) piping of northern Carroll county groundwater to the south-Carroll area; 2.) obtaining water from the City of Baltimore, (Liberty Reservoir); and 3.) building the Gillis Falls Reservoir. This ranking was influenced by concern over the significant environmental impact of the reservoir. Carroll County, however, has expressed concern that a pipeline may result in increased development along its route, outside the designated growth areas.

Recommended Action: The expected yields from recently found wells will meet the demand of potential development within current Town boundaries. However, continued

success at future well exploration is uncertain. To meet the needs of development that could be permitted by future annexations, the Town may need to rely on other water sources. The Town should continue to be involved in the debate over future water supply to the South Carroll area, and support the continued consideration of the Gillis Falls Reservoir Project.

#### **D. NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY SUMMARY**

Increased awareness of the effects development has on the environment has led to additional environmental legislation at the State and local levels. The 1992 Maryland Economic Growth Resource Protection and Planning Act and the 1991 Forest Conservation Act will both significantly affect planning practices in Mt. Airy. Mt. Airy's reliance on groundwater for the Town's water system will require comprehensive effective groundwater management as the Town grows. Appropriate environmental regulations are suggested.

##### **Goals & Actions:**

*In order to better manage the Town's environmental resources, the Town will:*

1. Comply with the requirements of the 1992 Planning Act.
2. Consider adoption of stream buffer standards based on the Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards and other available resources.
3. Adopt as a minimum the Forest Conservation Act steep slope definition and review options for more stringent steep slope definitions.
4. To facilitate goals of the Forest Conservation Act, identify priority forestation areas in the Town and make available appropriate public property for off-site afforestation.
5. Consider adoption of the Water Resource Management Standards developed by Carroll County, or other legislation to better protect groundwater resources.
6. Support Carroll County efforts to develop Gillis Falls Reservoir.



### III. ENHANCE THE PUBLIC REALM

A person's perception of their community comes from experiences that are in part shaped by the structure and elements of the public realm. A tree-lined street provides a peaceful setting for evening walks, Main Street and Park Avenue host festive community parades, the mere presence of religious and civic buildings can both comfort and inspire, historic sites recall our roots in the past: all these elements of the built environment serve a purpose greater than the bricks, mortar or landscaping from which they are made. It is this ability of the man-made environment to evoke emotional responses that obligates us to manage the public realm in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

The public realm is the network of places, spaces and buildings of which many people in the community feel a part. It is not enough for new development only to provide good roads, expand water and sewer systems, or meet building codes. New development must respect the qualities of the town and contribute new features designed to be compatible with the old. The master plan can play a central role in enhancing the public realm by identifying existing qualities in order to preserve them, by identifying missing needed elements of the community and planning for their provision, and by requiring future growth to respect and contribute to the Town character.



**Figure 28: Mount Airy's Town Logo**  
The Town logo is a perfect example of how the built environment often transcends its functional purpose to become a symbol of community. The Twin Arch Bridge and Pine Grove Chapel contribute to the unique character of Mt. Airy.

## A. IDENTIFY AND PRESERVE EXISTING COMMUNITY FEATURES

Figure 29 identifies existing community features. Included are civic and public buildings, parks, historic sites, and churches. These sites are important because they remind residents of the meaning of "community," and the architectural features instill a sense of pride. The following section identifies how some important places and buildings may be preserved or enhanced.

### 1. *Site Improvements:*

Almost all of the places or buildings identified are located on one of the Town's historic streets. By implementing the landscape improvements suggested in Chapter 1 these features can be enhanced. Visibility of prominent features is also important. Landscaping should frame views to these sites. Appropriate signage, lighting, flagpoles and similar elements can further enhance the prominence of significant sites.

### 2. *Street Alignments:*

Changes to road patterns, or the alignment of planned streets can emphasize important buildings or sites. Streets can be aligned to focus views on important buildings, similar to how the view north on Main St. is terminated by a view of St. James Episcopal Church. Pine Grove Cemetery is highly visible from Wildwood Park, and its significance may be reinforced by streets planned on axis with this view. (See Figures 30 & 31.)

### 3. *Historic Preservation & Downtown Revitalization:*

In 1984 a survey was undertaken by the Maryland Historical Trust resulting in the delineation of a Historic District in Mt. Airy which is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic District is centered in downtown and located predominantly along Main St., between Flower Ave. and the Mt. Airy Elementary School. The District includes the downtown area and most surrounding older residential areas. The Historic District survey rated every building for its contribution to the historic character of the District. Three properties were rated "A" having exceptional significance; the Mt. Airy Train Station, Calvary Methodist Church, and Pine Grove Chapel. About a dozen buildings, most in the downtown area, received a "C" rating, which designates buildings that are potential historic resources but require rehabilitation or restoration. Most other buildings, particularly residences, were rated "B", historically significant. The historic district listing can be used to promote rehabilitation of buildings in the downtown area through tax credits, grants and low interest loans available for historic preservation of commercial buildings.

## Figure 29

### EXISTING FEATURES

#### Civic Buildings

- a. Mt. Airy Town Hall
- b. Parr's Ridge Library & Senior Center
- c. Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Inc.
- d. Twin Ridge Elem. School
- e. Mt. Airy Elem. School
- f. Mt. Airy Middle School

#### Parks

- g. Watkins Park
- h. Prospect Park
- i. East-West Park

#### Historic Sites

- j. Pine Grove Cemetery
- k. Mt. Airy Train Station
- l. Twin Arch Bridge
- m. Parr's Spring
- Churches:
- n. Calvary United Methodist Church
- o. St. James Episcopal Church
- p. Mt. Airy Baptist Church
- q. Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints
- r. Mt. Airy Christian Community Church
- s. Warren Methodist Church

#### Other

- t. Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Co. Activities Building
- u. American Legion Post 191





Figure 30: View north to St. James Episcopal Church from Main St.

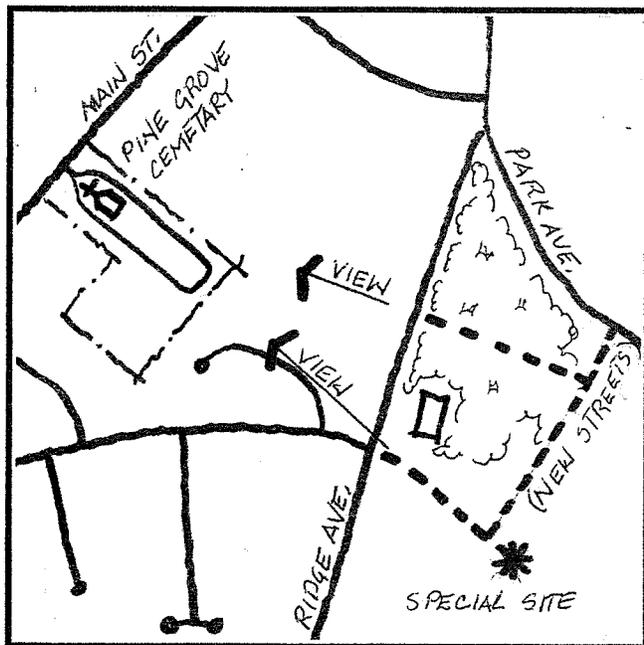
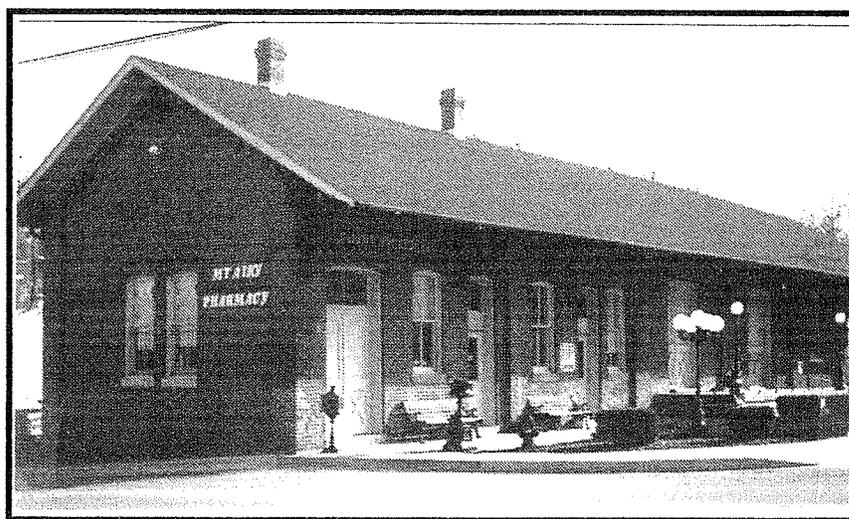


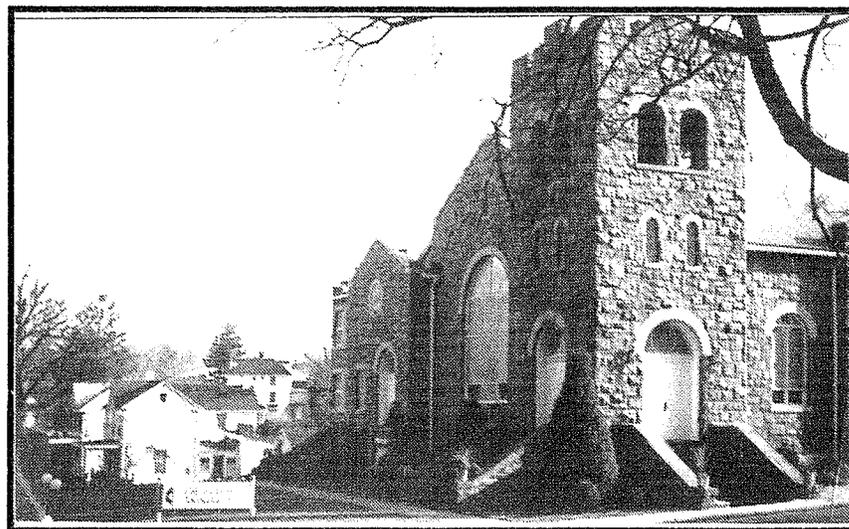
Figure 31: Views to Pine Grove Chapel  
New streets in Wildwood Park could be aligned to focus views to Pine Grove Chapel, reinforcing the importance of this historic site.



Revitalization of the Downtown, the most significant place in Mt. Airy's public realm, must give due consideration to historic preservation. A "Downtown Improvements" committee should be established to suggest methods by which the historic downtown may be improved. The Committee should be directed to take a comprehensive look at how to improve the Downtown, including the potential for historic preservation and restoration, possible changes to zoning and land-use to encourage Downtown development, marketing strategies to attract new businesses, public improvements such as lighting and signage, and available grant and loan programs that may be available to execute such programs. The Committee may also serve to educate all residents about history and future growth options for the Downtown. The Committee should have representation from many groups, including Downtown merchants, local historians, architects or persons with related professional backgrounds, the Planning Commission and the Town Council and local residents.



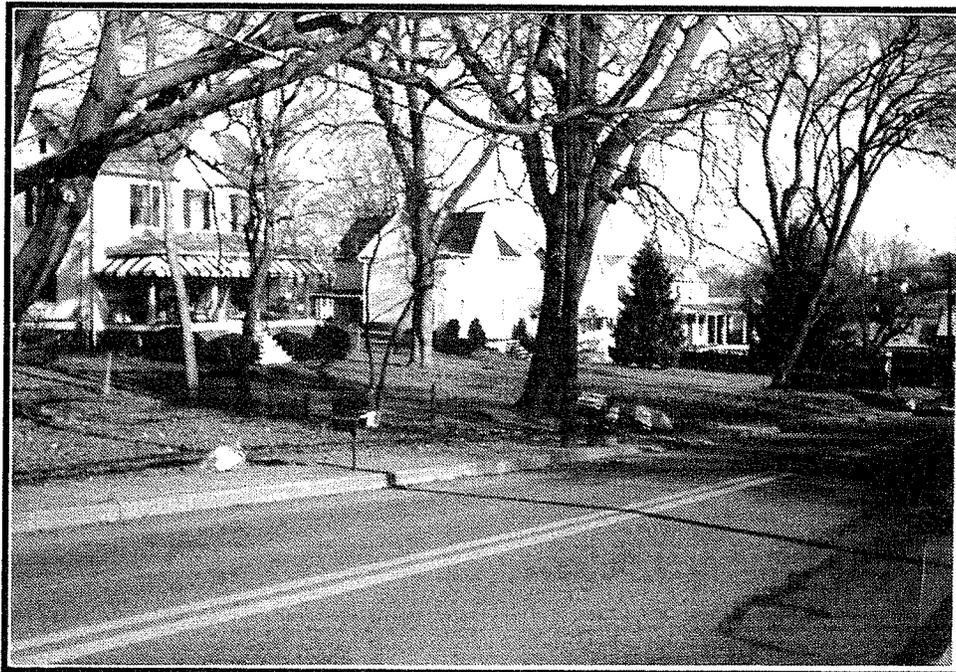
**Figure 33: Mt. Airy Train Station**



**Figure 34: Calvary United Methodist Church**



**Figure 35: View of Buildings in Downtown.**



**Figure 36: View of Homes on S. Main St.**

## B. ANALYSIS OF THE TOWN STRUCTURE

While individual buildings and sites contribute to a community's identity, the street system is the foundation of the community framework. The organization of the street system often reflects unique environmental features, social or economic factors, cultural influences or the settlement period. Three typical street system organizations are the grid, radial, and linear. In each pattern a different order or hierarchy is established that inherently determines appropriate locations for important spaces and buildings. In the grid system a "square" defined by four streets may assume the role of town center. In the radial system, by comparison, the center is the obvious "heart" of the community and many streets may play both a ceremonial or functional role. The linear street system relies on a single street to serve both functional and ceremonial responsibilities, and the "heart" of the community is usually located where important crossroads intersect that street.

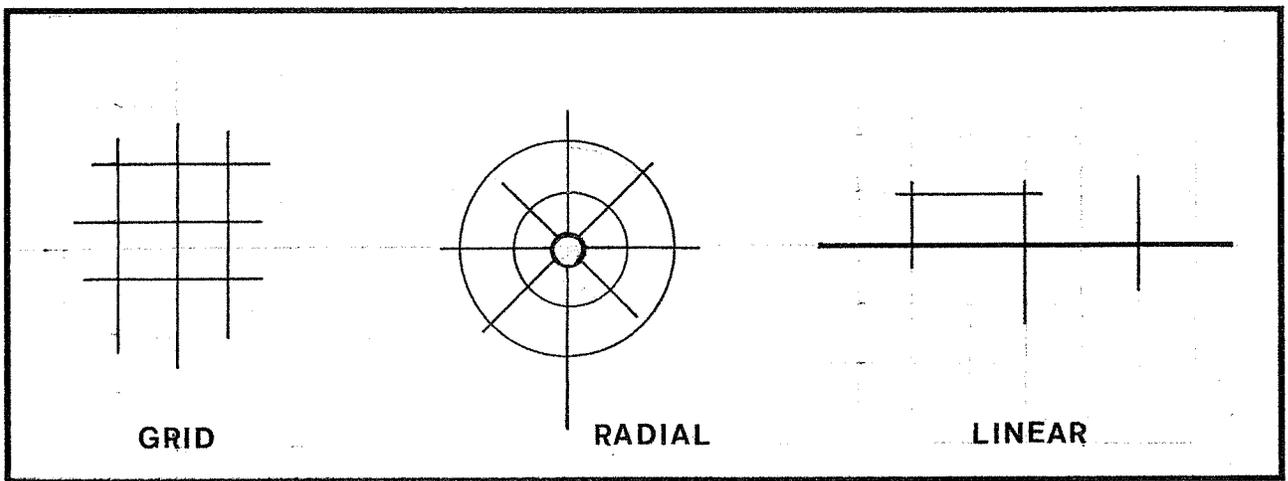


Figure 37: Three basic street system types.

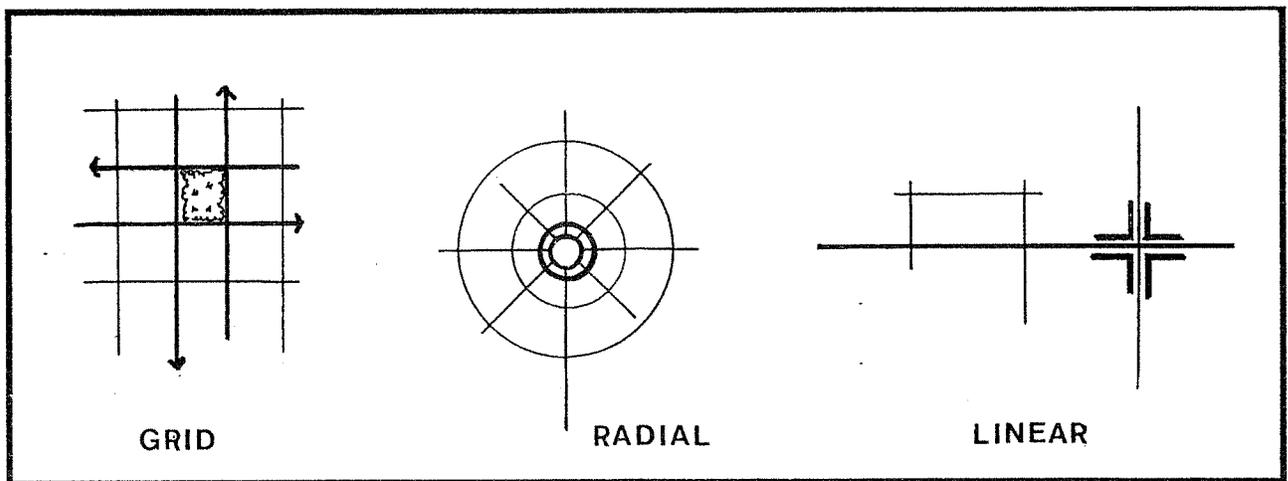


Figure 38: Each street system creates a natural hierarchy.

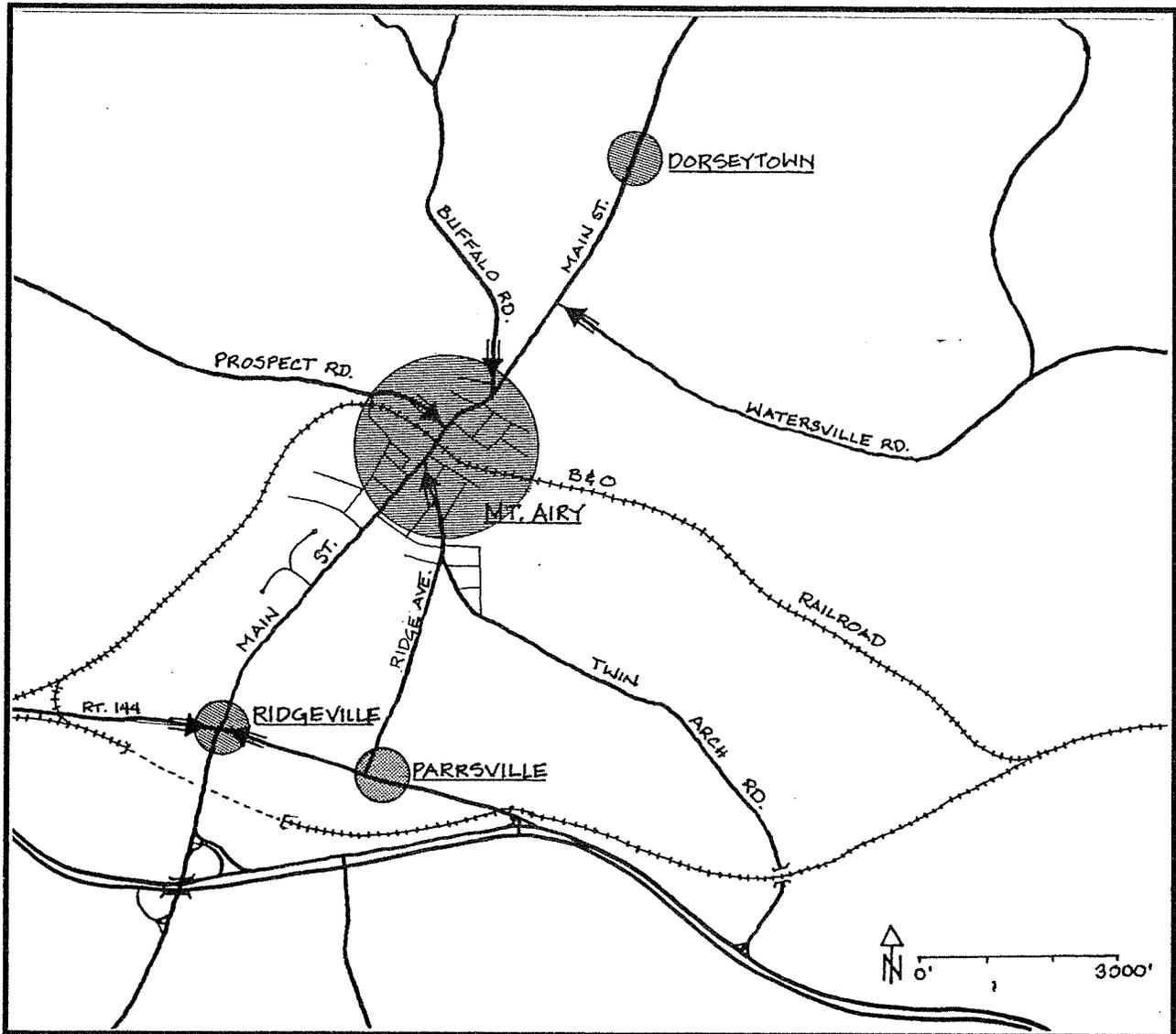


Figure 39: Mt. Airy's street pattern prior to 1969.

Mt. Airy's "structure" is similar to the linear street pattern because most development occurred along the length of Main Street between Ridgeville and Dorseytown. Mt. Airy's "heart" is in the downtown, which developed where the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crossed Main Street. Several major thoroughfares also intersected Main Street near the downtown, including Buffalo Road, Prospect Road, and Twin Arch Rd. Ridgeville, Parrsville and Dorseytown were all nearby "cross-road" communities.

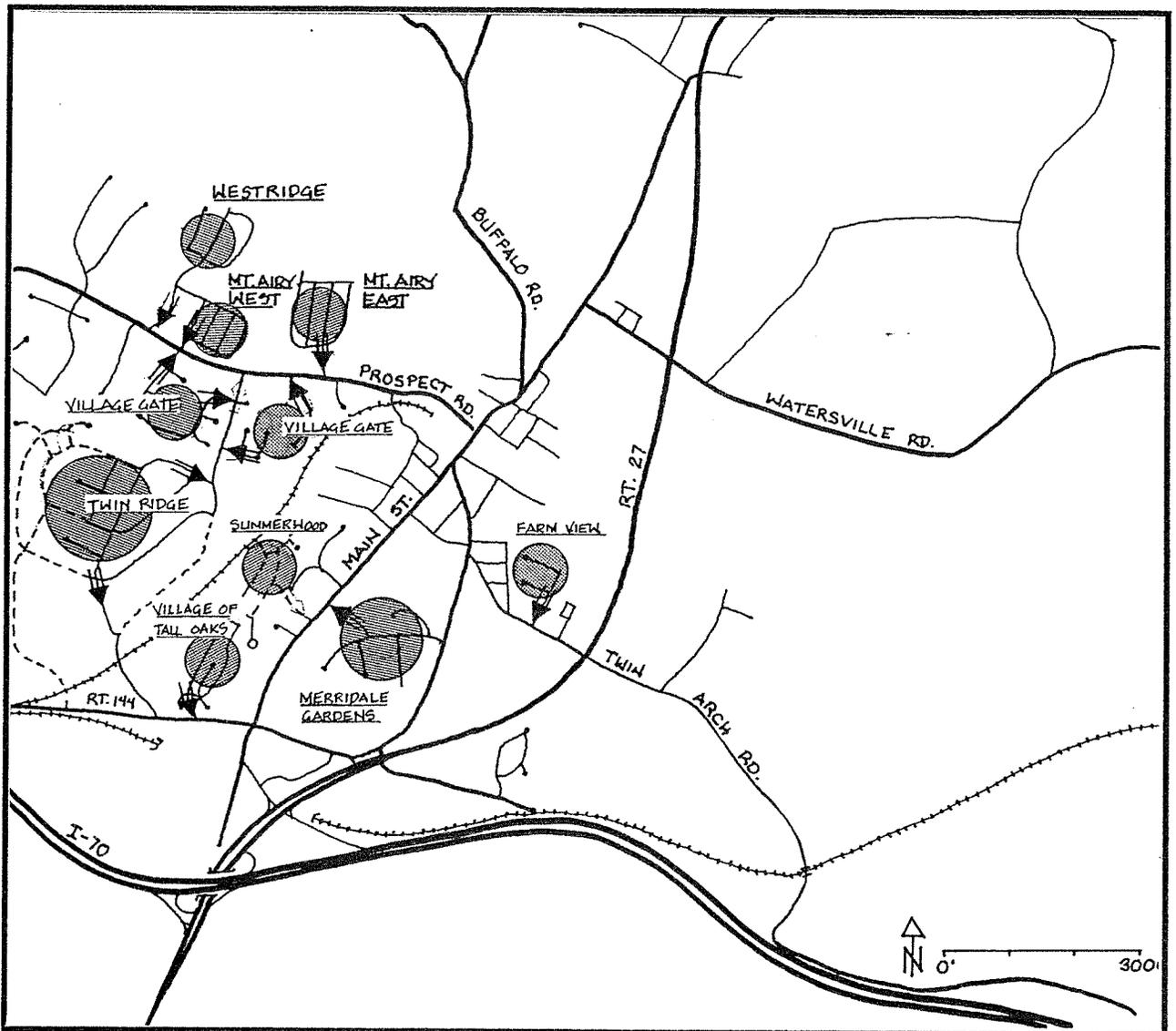


Figure 40: Current street patterns and new developments.

A limitation of the linear system in Mt. Airy is that the amount of growth that can be “connected” with Main Street has been restricted by the Town’s topography. Historically all development occurred along the length of Main Street, which runs north-south along the top of Parr’s Ridge. Most new development that has occurred is only incidentally tied to Main Street. More often, new development occurs off older, secondary roads that occupy the more gradual grades leading to Parr’s Ridge. Most of these older roads have below standard or no sidewalks, limiting travel to car trips through Town rather than more memorable encounters that happen while walking or biking. A functional and symbolic link is needed to provide a community amenity within new development and provide connection directly to Main St.

New residential developments are designed with few connections to Main St., and often are isolated from one another. These "single entrance" subdivisions have been fostered by zoning regulations that encourage the distinct separation of different building types. The subdivision review process exacerbates the problem by requiring buffers and berms be constructed around each increment of new development.

These clustered developments are fundamentally different than the three basic street systems because they are not designed to be a compatible expansion of the Town. The grid can be expanded by adding new parallel streets and the underlying structure remains the same. The radial town can be expanded by lengthening the "spokes" and adding new rings. The linear system could be expanded along its length, or by adding cross-streets. New development clusters are often only connected to the Town along secondary streets and are rarely designed to be extended for future development.

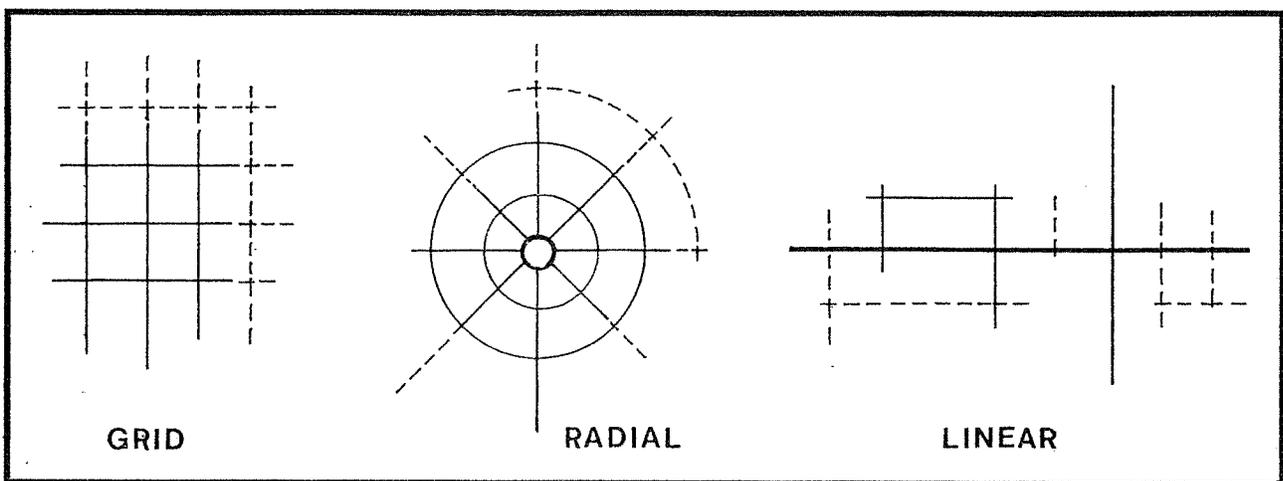


Figure 41: These street systems can grow and maintain their original integrity.

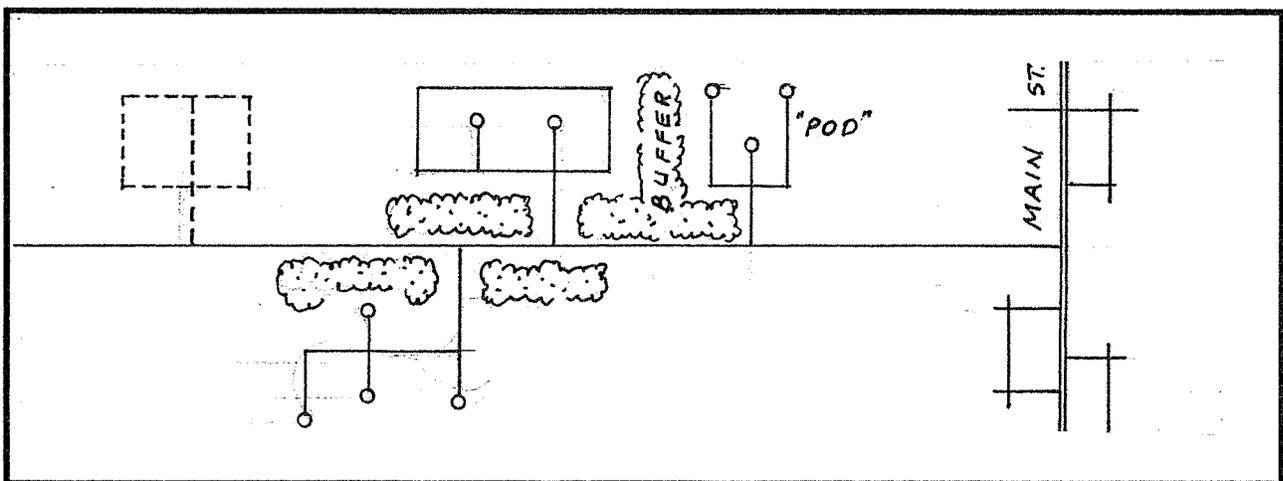


Figure 42: "Single entrance" subdivisions are indirectly connected to Main St., and not compatible with the existing road network.

A third challenge to the development of a cohesive community is the lack of a location for community interaction within new development. New developments are only indirectly connected to Main Street and rarely connected to adjacent development. No place is being planned within new developments for the introduction of community amenities like those listed in Figure 29 on page 43.

In new residential developments almost all lots and buildings are a uniform size. This helps to perpetuate the belief that the introduction of a different building type will not “fit in.” In the older areas of Town many different lot and home sizes are found on any one street. This variety can better assimilate a different use, such as how the Calvary Methodist Church fits in with residences along S. Main St. It is unlikely that any public use will ever be located within completed new developments.

In Figure 43 varied street widths, building setbacks and land-uses are shown to exist on adjacent streets, and even on the same street, in an older area of Town. In new development similar homes are built on lots of uniform size, fronting on streets of uniform width, and are setback an equal distant from the street. There is very little differentiation in character from one street to the next, and many new neighborhoods are strikingly similar to each other. This uniformity does not provide the interest or character that is cherished in the older neighborhoods of Town.

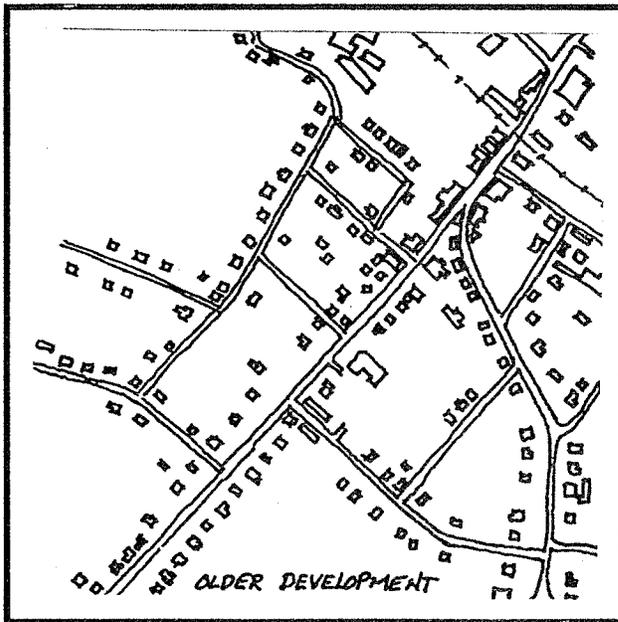


Figure 43: Older Development Patterns

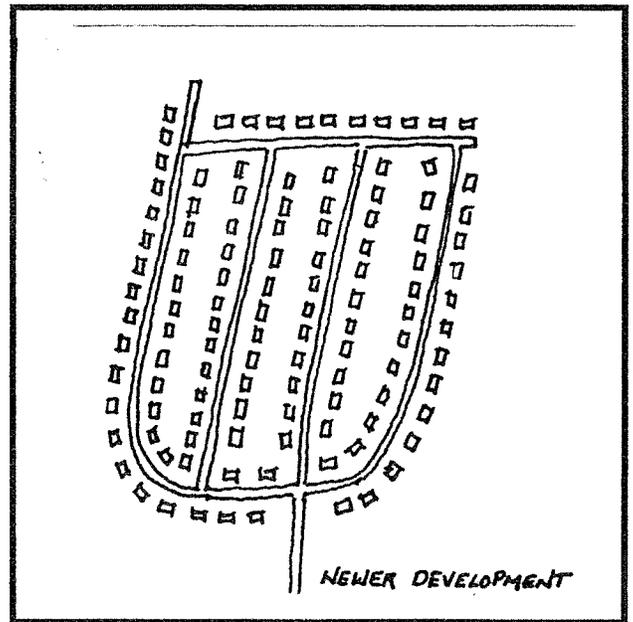


Figure 44: Newer Development Patterns

## C. DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

The Community Framework should reflect both the inherent order of the Town and address the growth-related problems in order to achieve a coherent sense of community. The following are the four basic principles of the proposed Community Framework:

1. *Reinforce the primary importance of Main St.:*

- a. Landscape Improvements Along Main St.: Main St. can be reinforced by implementing the landscaping plan discussed in Chapter 1, and by establishing the program for Downtown Revitalization discussed earlier in this chapter.

Some of Main Street's unique qualities should also be maintained. The historic flavor of the residential architecture should be protected, and infill buildings should be compatibly designed. The landscaping along Main Street is informal, with large old trees gracing front yards but not formally lining the street. As many older trees are dying back, new young ones should be planted now to fill their place. The residential use of homes has been ardently protected, successfully preventing the commercialization of Main Street.

- b. Gateways: Another opportunity to reinforce the significance of Main St. was created by the Rt. 27 bypass. Main St. used to be part of the major north-south route from Westminster to Damascus and points south. When the Rt. 27 bypass was constructed in the 1970's, Main St. was separated from the direct north-south movement to move traffic around the Town. This arrangement has provided an opportunity to "announce" Main Street at its north and south entrances from Rt. 27 by a gateway element at each end of Main St. where it meets Rt. 27. This could be easily accomplished by signage, a flagpole, landscaping or similar special features.

*Note:* Current Town boundaries do not extend to the north intersection of Main St. and Rt. 27, although the Town may annex this far north in the future. Until this time, signage at this intersection could announce Main St. as the road leading to Mt. Airy.

- c. Downtown: Downtown is the physical, historical, and symbolic heart of the Mt. Airy, and the focal point of Main St. Maintaining active businesses in the Downtown area, "sprucing up" the sidewalks and building facades, and continuing parades and festivals that are centered in Downtown are just a few ways the Town can celebrate this special place. The Downtown Improvements Committee suggested earlier in this chapter may provide a framework from which to initiate some of these efforts.

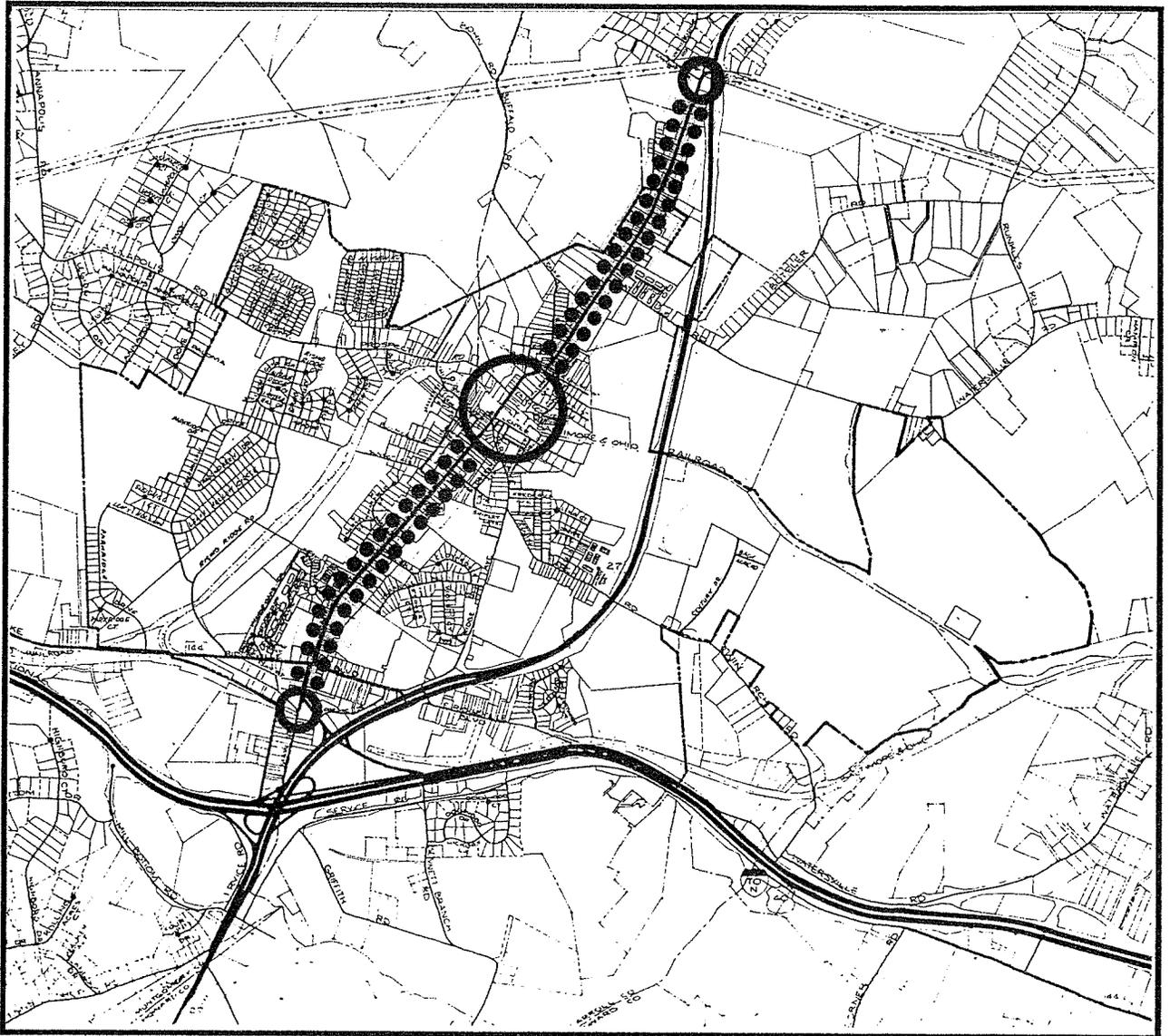


Figure 45: Community Framework Plan 1, Main Street

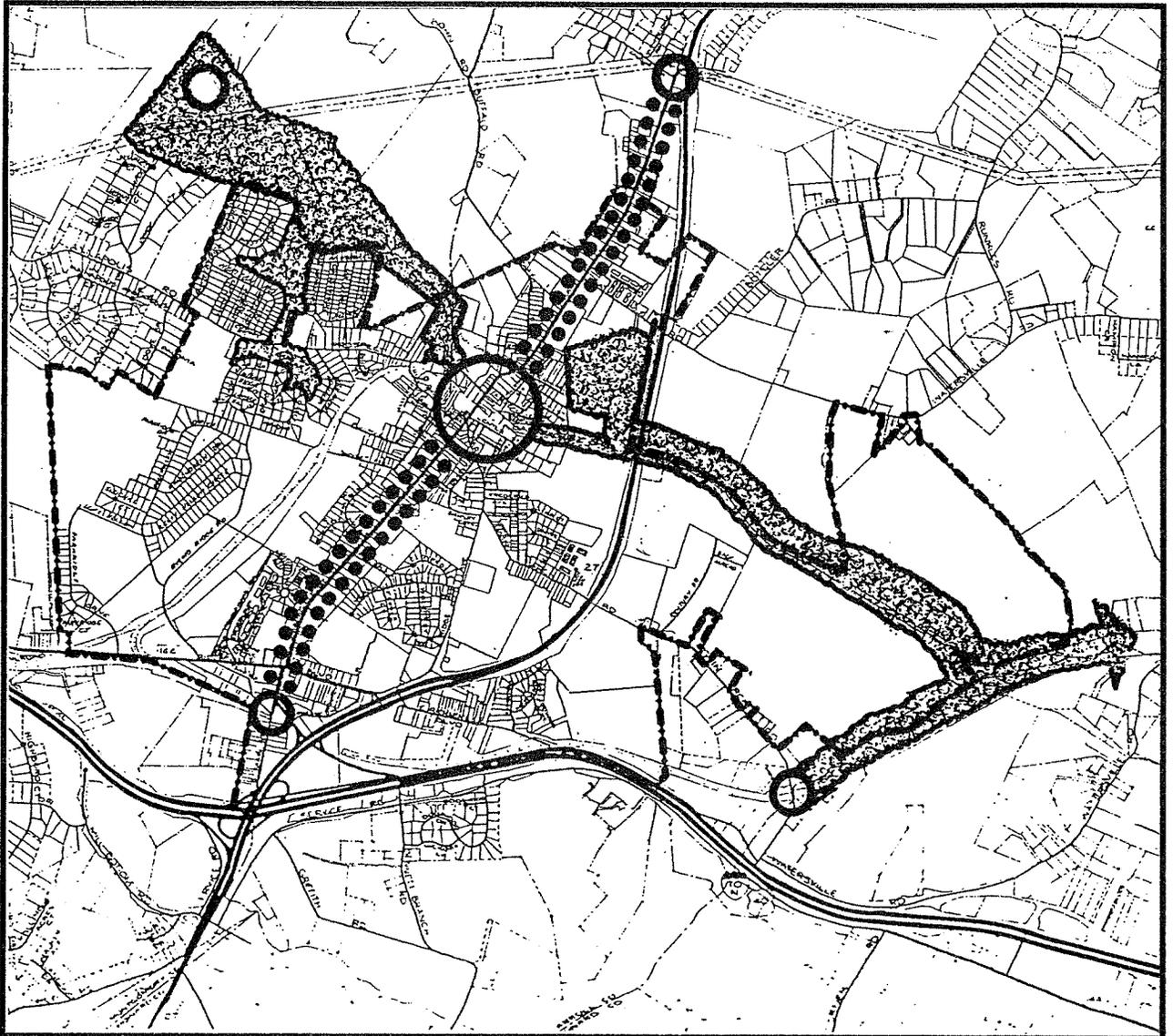
2. *Provide an east-west "spine" to connect new areas of Town with Main St., just as the north-south spine of Main St. interconnects historical development along Parr's Ridge.*

It is not possible or desirable to try to create a new Main St., linking development to the east and west of Town. Rather, a new "spine" that is compatible with new development characteristics is possible. Much open space has been left undeveloped at the periphery of new developments, often because of steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains or similar environmental limitations. This open space has tended to occur along swales flowing in an east-west direction away from Parr's Ridge. These swales form interconnected stream systems, and provide an ideal path for a new east-west linear park. This new "spine" will naturally interconnect undeveloped open space around existing development, as well as be protected from development on vacant land by environmental regulations.

While Main Street presents the features of the built environment, the linear park will show off the spectacular hills, valleys and views framed by the rolling topography. The park will meet Main Street at its heart, the Mt. Airy Train Station, further reinforcing the importance of the railroad on the development of Mt. Airy. History continues to be an integral element of the park as it extends east, along a 2-mile length of the historic Baltimore and Ohio Railroad track, which was abandoned in the early 1970's. On its route east, the linear park meets Watkins Park, providing a short and beautiful 1/2 mile walk from the Train Station through the ravine which was cut for rail passage across Parr's Ridge. At its eastern-most point, the trail will meet the original stone bridge that carried the railroad over the Patapsco River to downtown Mt. Airy. From this point the trail could be continued south to the Twin Arch Bridge, and east, connecting to the Gillis Falls Reservoir or all the way to Sykesville.

To the west the park would extend to the 90 acres purchased by the Town. On its route west, the linear park will connect with Prospect Park and East-West Park, increasing the accessibility of these amenities to many residents by walking or biking. At its western end, one of the prominent hilltops on the Town property could be capped with a large pavilion or similar civic feature, appropriately terminating the western end of the park.

Along its route, several "green fingers" could reach into new developments, further increasing accessibility to residents not directly adjacent to the park system.



**Figure 46: Community Framework Plan 2,  
East-West Linear Park**

3. *Provide street connections between new developments, and with Main Street.*

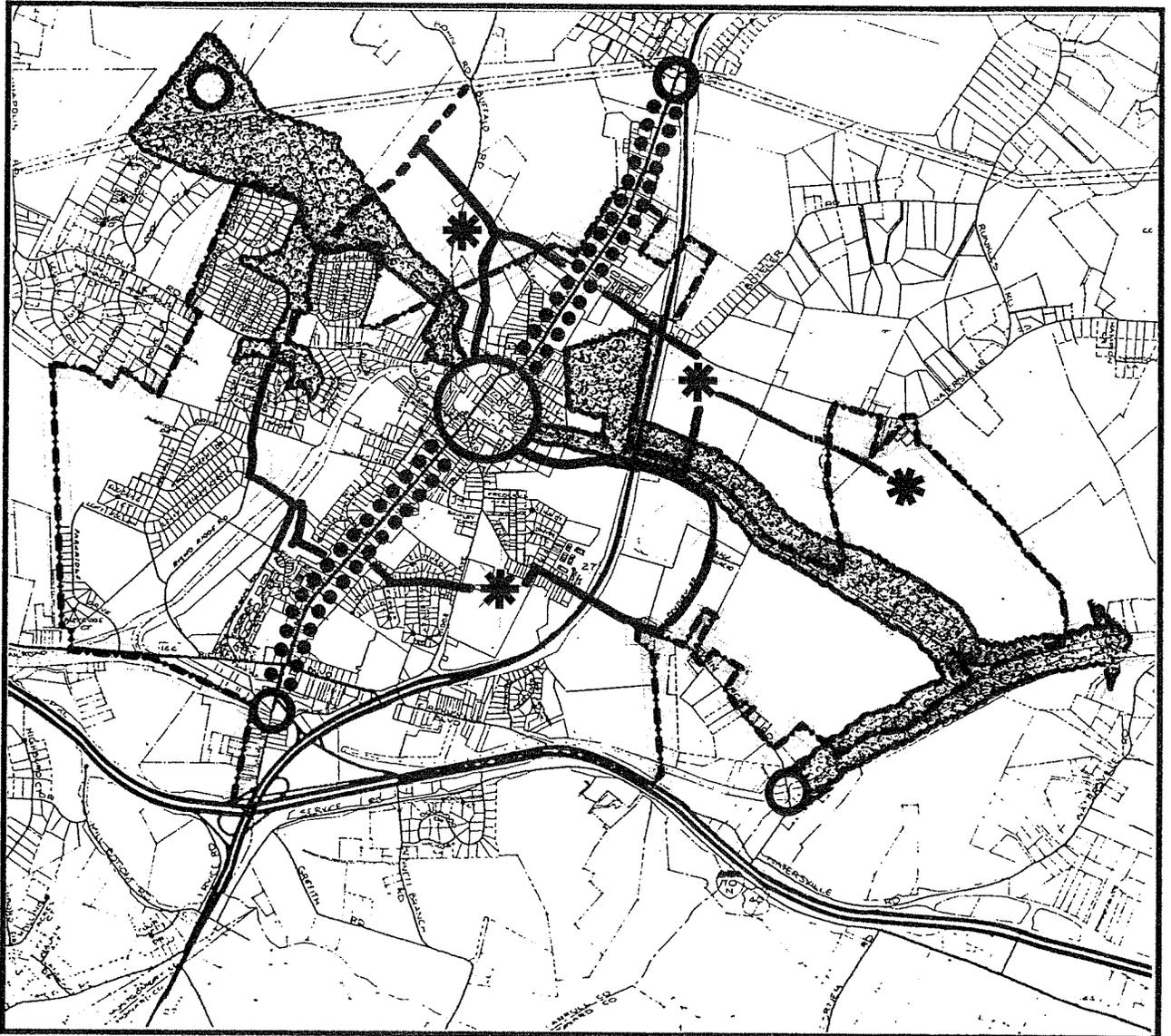
An interconnected road network will relieve the major roads of some minor in-town car trips, as well as provide for opportunity for community interaction. Without these minor connections, all car trips are relegated to heavily traveled "collector" roads which, in turn, are not pleasant roads to walk or bike along. Collector road design standards exacerbate this problem by severing communities, such as is evident with the way the new Rising Ridge Road divides the development of Village Gate.

The interconnected "local" roads should be designed with appropriately scaled and landscaped streets, inviting walking and biking between neighborhoods.

4. *Provide a location for social interaction within new development.*

For new developments that are more removed from Main Street, it would be beneficial to provide settings for community interaction at the neighborhood scale. Ideally, a civic or public use should be central to several developments, and within a short, five-minute walking distance. Figure 47 identifies possible locations for neighborhood centers that are central to several existing or future residential developments. Local street connections are possible between each center and Main Street, and also directly or indirectly between each other.

Public and semi-public as well as private enterprises can provide a place for socialization. A simple park with a bench or two can provide a small social setting. However, uses that attract moderate levels of activity better encourage such interaction. Churches, association meeting halls, and community activity buildings are civic-minded uses that can be designed sensitively within residential areas.



**Figure 47: Community Framework Plan 3,  
Neighborhood Centers & Interconnected Street System**

## D. IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned earlier, the public realm consists of all places or spaces that people perceive as an intrinsic part of the Town character. Public as well as private development contributes to the perception of Mt. Airy's character. While the Town has direct influence over the location and design of public buildings and parks, the control the Town has exercised over private development has been largely limited to basic zoning and infrastructure decisions. To ensure that future development respects and enhances the Town character, elements of new development that make up the public realm must be thoughtfully designed and integrated into the existing character. Unique site features, the arrangement of streets and blocks, the relationship of buildings to the street, and the landscaping all contribute to the character created by new development and determine the "fit" between the new and the old.

Consideration of the "design" of new development should be an integral part of the development review process. The following section outlines some basic design techniques that could increase the Town's ability to improve the quality of new development at three levels of detail: the site plan, the streetscape, and the building lot.

### 1. *Site Plan:*

The site plan should be shaped by many factors, only one of which is zoning regulation. The topography, views to and from the site, historic or other significant features, adjacent patterns of development, environmental features, parks and recreation opportunities, and similar site influences should all be used to help shape the site plan. These features should be compiled as a "Site Analysis Plan" and submitted at the sketch plan phase of a development.

The sketch plan or "Concept Plan" should illustrate how the proposed site design responds to the various site issues. Site sections across the major areas of the site may be required to help illustrate the site design's response to topography, views, open space definition, or similar features.

These submittals should enable the Planning Commission and the applicant to be more aware of unique opportunities each site presents, and result in better site design. Both submittals should be required by the Subdivision Ordinance, and specific elements to be included on each plan should be identified.

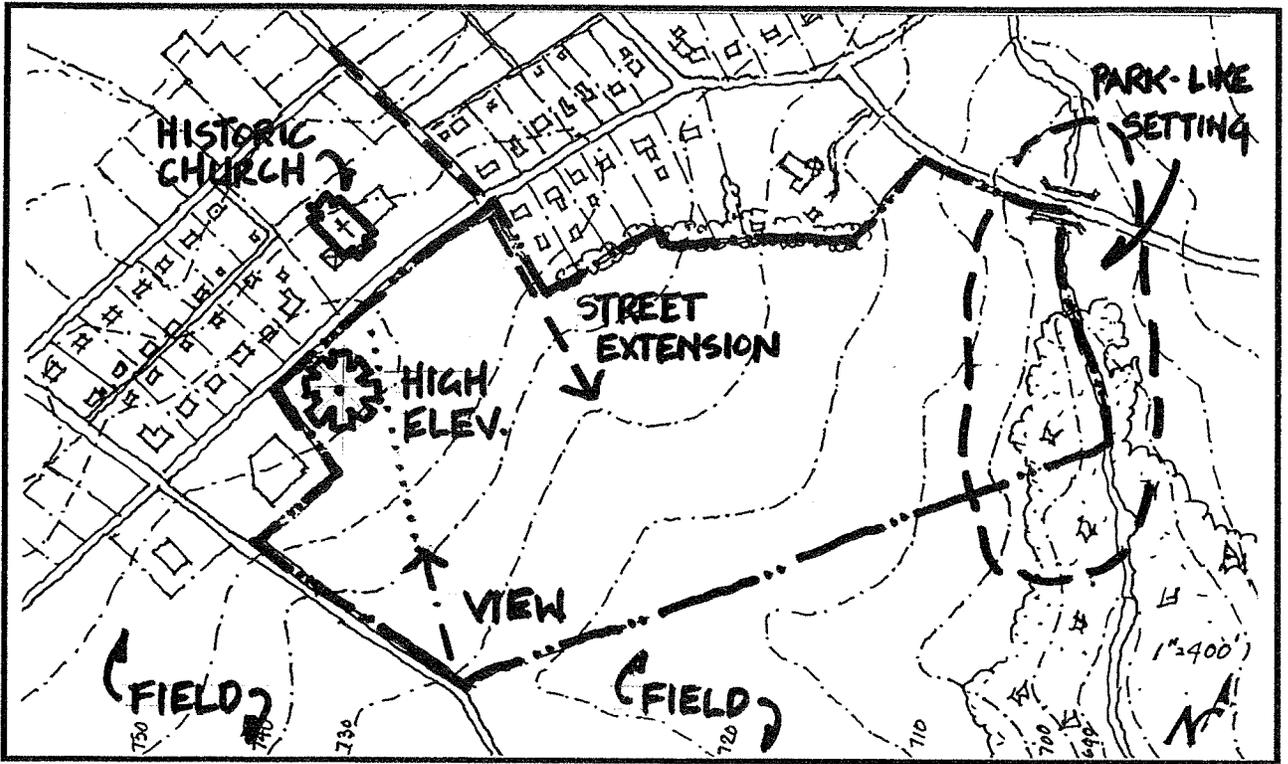


Figure 48: "Site Analysis" Plan

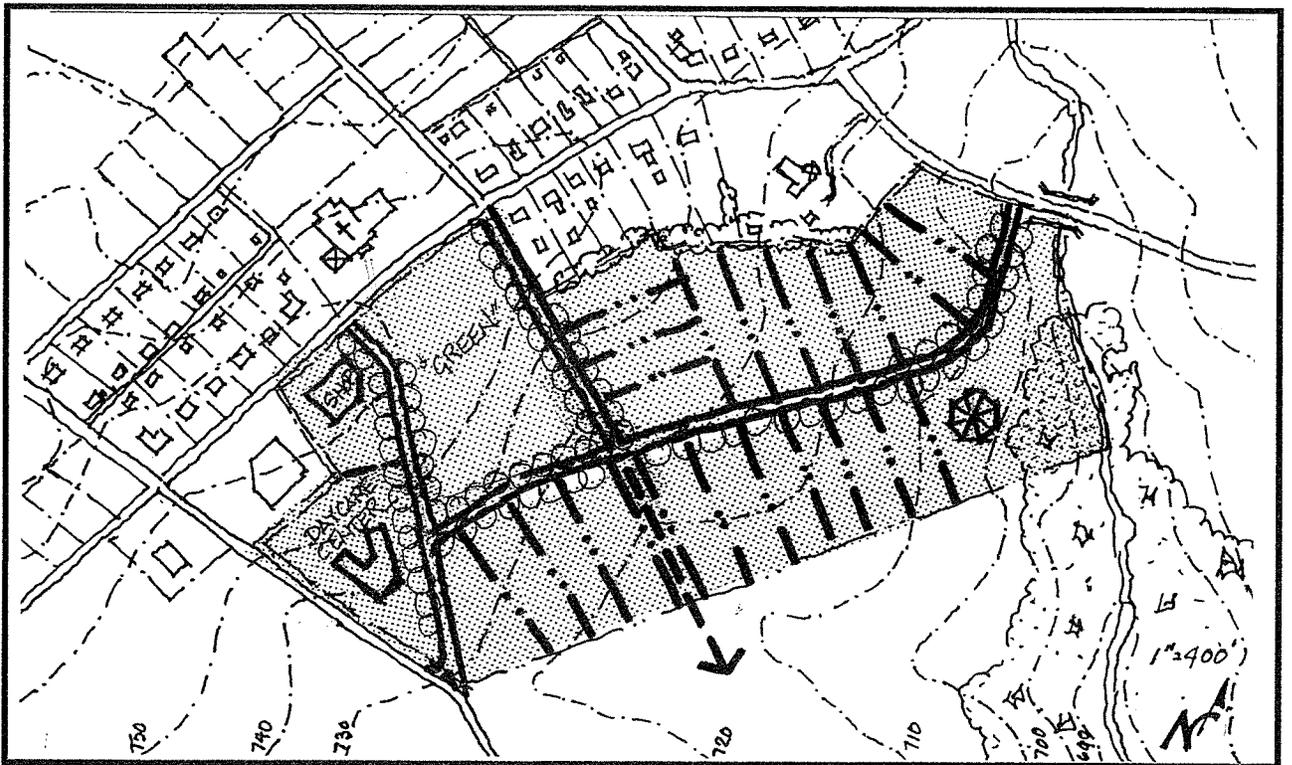


Figure 49: "Concept Plan"

## 2. *The Streetscape:*

The streetscape is a very important determinant of a new development's contribution to the public realm. Beautiful streets are remembered with admiration and are a credit to the Town. Streetscapes with bad proportions, inappropriate or no landscaping, and other unattractive characteristics are forgotten, or worse yet, detract from the Town's character.

Larger developments have the ability to create entire streetscapes. Each new street can have a unique character, or a hierarchy can be established where each streetscape may reflect higher, moderate and lower street classifications within the development. If a street hierarchy is developed it should be identified in the Concept Plan.

Such a hierarchy is evident in the historic district of Mt. Airy. The residential sections of Main Street's streetscape are characterized by greater setbacks, larger homes on larger lots, informal landscaping, and a fairly narrow street with no onstreet parking. The side-streets such as Hill St. have lesser building setbacks, moderate sized and large homes, and smaller lots relative to Main St. The downtown on Main St., in contrast, has no setback, wide sidewalks, no landscaping, historic building facades, on-street parking, and pedestrian-friendly shop-fronts. The streetscape reflects the relative importance and purpose of each area of Town, contributing a sense of "order" to the Town.

Review of a project's impact on or development of a streetscape can be easily illustrated by a street section. The Street Section should include a section through a typical building front, the front yard, sidewalk, any landscaping, the street width (identifying parking and travel lanes), street lighting, and any other relevant information. If several different types of streets are proposed, including alleys, a street section should be submitted for each.

The Street Section(s) should be submitted along with the Concept Plan and/or Preliminary Plan.

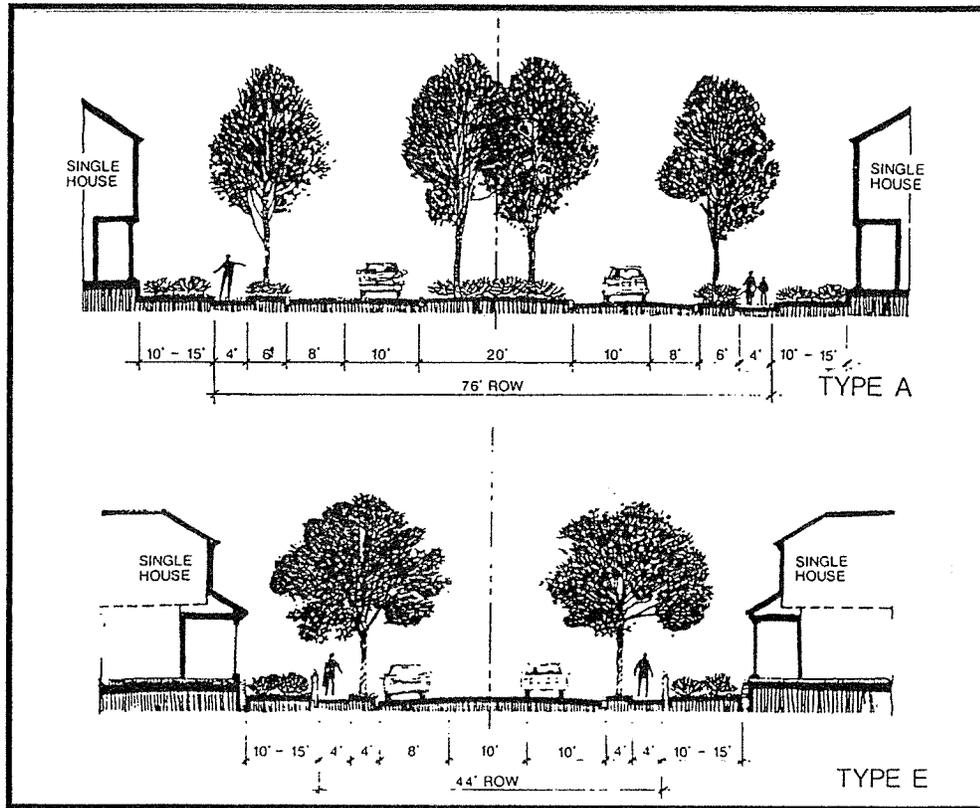


Figure 50:  
Street Sections

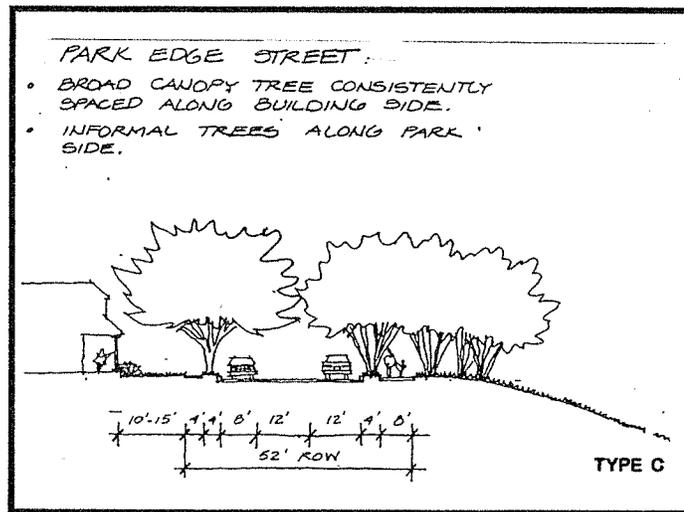
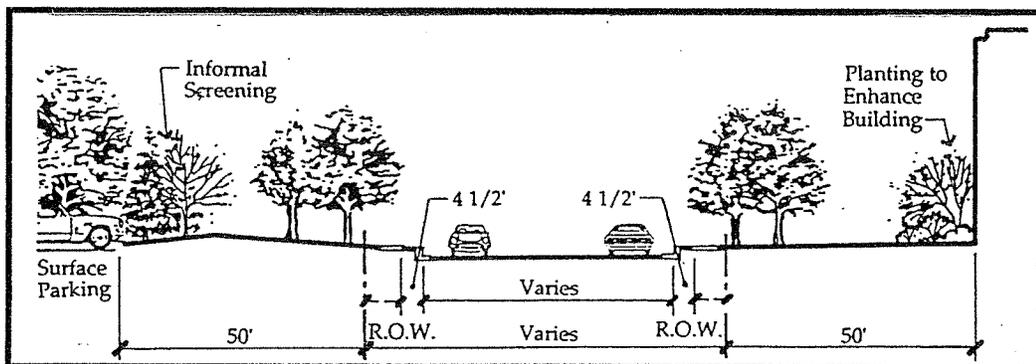


Figure 51:  
Street Sections

Figure 52:  
Street Sections



### 3. *The Building Lot:*

There are many features of the building lot that contribute to the qualities of the streetscape, most notably the front yard landscaping and the building front. It is difficult to regulate good design in these areas as judgments can become subjective.

There is one element of the building lot that can and should be reviewed; the parking provisions. While the number of cars owned by a family continues to rise, the parking provisions have become more visually dominant in subdivision plans. This has come about due to many factors: the absence of alleys or lanes, the reduction of lot sizes, the cost of additional driveway pavement or garages, and poor planning.

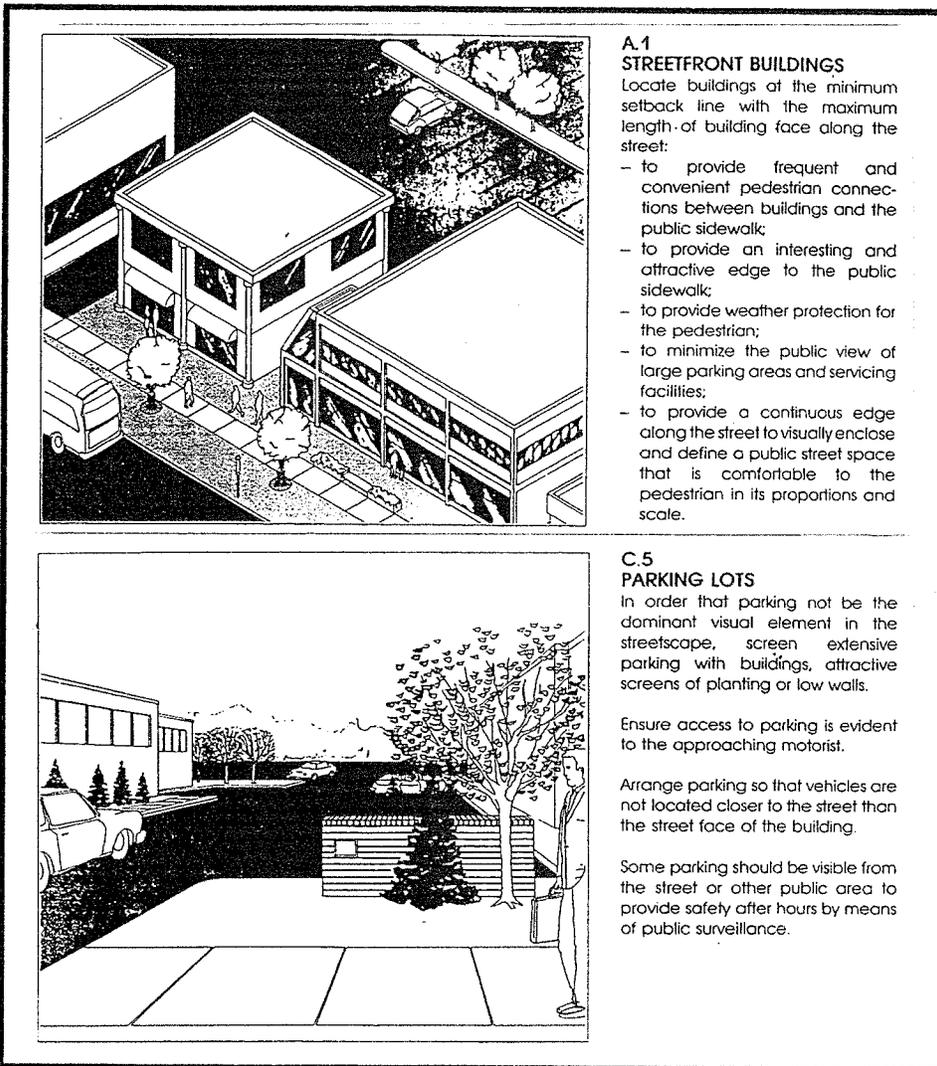
A drive down Main St. and other older streets in Town can help illustrate the impact of proper parking provisions. Very few homes have garages that are next to the house and open to the street. Many have detached garages that are set back some distance from the house. As a result the house design is the visual focus, rather than the overwhelming scale of garage doors. Similarly, the streetscape is improved when it is not dominated by cars parked on concrete pads in front of homes or garages that protrude in front of the homes.

At the time of preliminary plan approval, a Lot Plan should be submitted that shows the arrangement of a typical lot. The plan should include the house location, driveway and parking provisions, side and rear yards, and other relevant information. If there are several different lot layouts proposed, (corner lots or excessively shallow or narrow lots,) a plan of each should be submitted. The Planning Commission should review these for the effort made to minimize the visibility of parking from the street. If the parking provisions will be highly visible from the street, a front elevation may be requested to review options to minimize its impact.

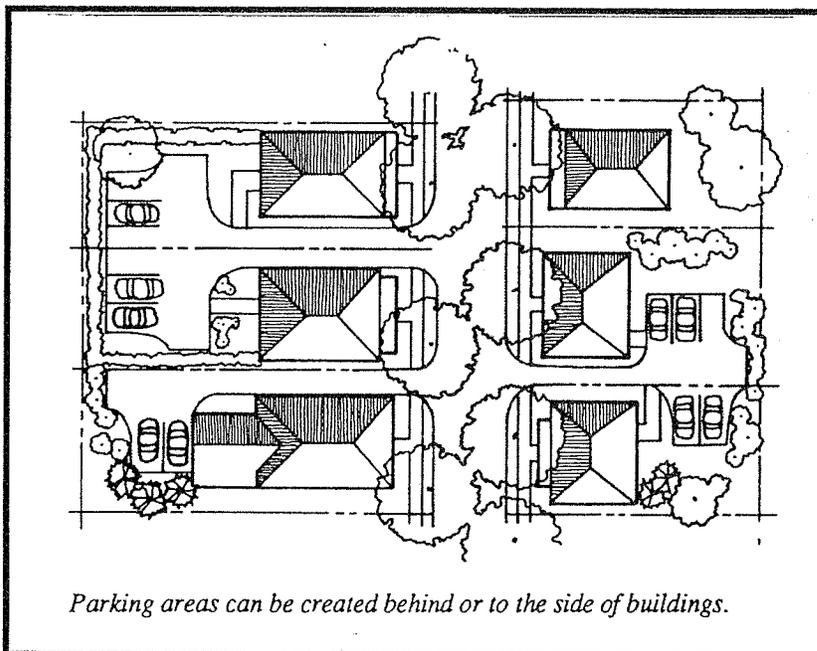
### 4. *Design Guidelines:*

Many communities have adopted Design Guidelines to facilitate better development design. Design Guidelines are a tool which can guide the design of the site, streetscape, and parking provisions, and often are used to guide improvements in historic districts. Guidelines can specify different levels of detail, and should be no more restrictive than necessary to achieve the desired goals.

Design guidelines should be explored as an option to further encourage better site design for new developments in Town.



**Figure 53:**  
**Design Guidelines,**  
**City of Scarborough**  
**Planning Dept.**



**Figure 54:**  
**Design Guidelines,**  
**Village Planning Handbook;**  
**Bucks County, Pennsylvania**

## E. POLICY SUMMARY

This chapter has identified some important qualities of Mt. Airy's public realm, discussed ways they may be protected, and has looked for ways that the community may be improved. The following summarizes the recommendations of this chapter:

### *Recommendations:*

1. Reinforce the primary importance of Main Street to the Town by creating "gateways" to Main Street, encouraging streetscape improvements, and researching downtown preservation and revitalization opportunities.
2. Develop a linear park along an east-west route to interconnect new development, existing Town parks, the historic B & O Railroad right-of-way, and the South Branch of the Patapsco River.
3. Provide a secondary street network to interconnect all areas of Town.
4. Propose public or semi-public functions within new developments to impart a sense of community activity and involvement.
5. Consider formation of a Downtown Improvements Committee to maintain and improve the unique qualities of the Historic Town Center.
6. Pattern new development after desirable qualities of the old.
7. Look for opportunities to enhance significant Town features during the site design and development process.
8. Improve the quality of new development through greater attention to site development, enhanced streetscapes, and lot designs.
9. Develop criteria for a Site Analysis Plan and Concept Plan submittals.

Figure 55: Community Framework

*Boyd*



## IV. LAND USE & ZONING

Zoning regulations are the Town's most influential control over future development. Zoning and subdivision regulations not only determine what land may be used for, but affect the appearance or "character" of new development, regulate the site design, and regulate the connections between new and existing development. Existing zoning regulations and land-use definitions, particularly as they affect commercial and industrial development, can dramatically affect the success of the Town's economic development base. Inappropriate definitions, categories, and regulations can needlessly complicate the plan review and development process, and provide no benefit to the property owner or the Town.

The first section of this chapter examines how existing zoning and subdivision regulations are affecting these characteristics of the Town, and establishes goals for the new land use and zoning plans.

The second section of this chapter analyzes the existing zoning plan and current land-use patterns. These observations lead to the recommendations in the third and fourth sections, proposed changes to current zoning and the new Comprehensive Land-Use Plan.

### A. ZONING AND THE TOWN CHARACTER

#### 1. *Pattern and diversity of land uses:*

Current zoning categories tend to define a narrow range of permitted building types or land uses. These categories are typically applied to an entire property such that a large 200 acre parcel may be designated as one zone only. This practice results in residential sprawl or lengthy commercial strips.

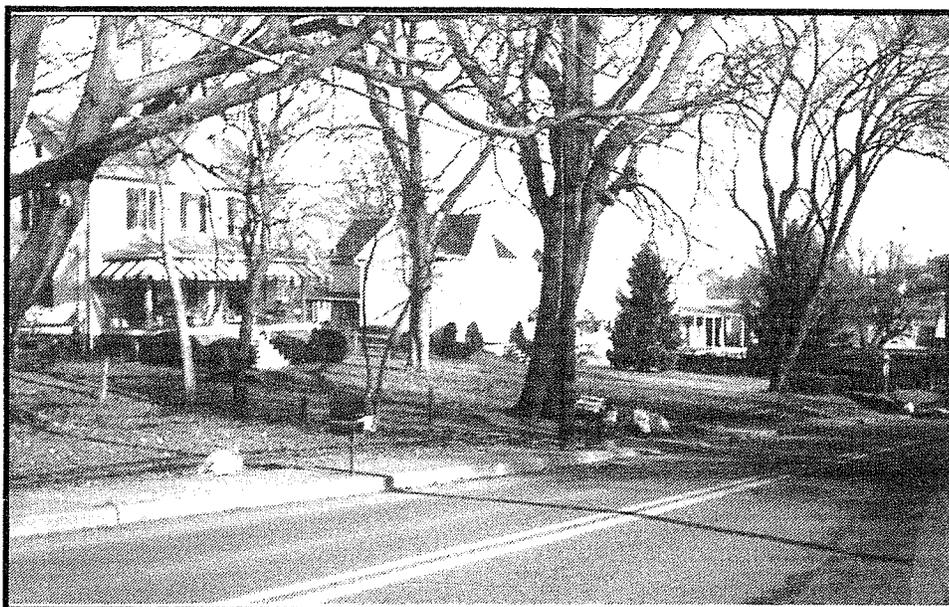
The contrast between the old and new areas of Town is exaggerated by this different "pattern" of development. The older areas of Mt. Airy were developed over a long period of time and were generally not regulated by restrictive zoning categories. Within the older areas a great variety of residential building types and small and large commercial facilities can be found intermingled. There are few conflicts caused by this integration, and the mix of building types and uses has greatly contributed to the character of the Town.

The diversity of land-uses in the older areas of Town also accommodate activities that tend to be excluded by the strict categorization of current zoning. Home-based businesses, small professional offices, bed and breakfasts, day care, apartments over small retail shops, and similar uses that do not fall neatly within a zoning category have difficulty finding an acceptable site within the Town.

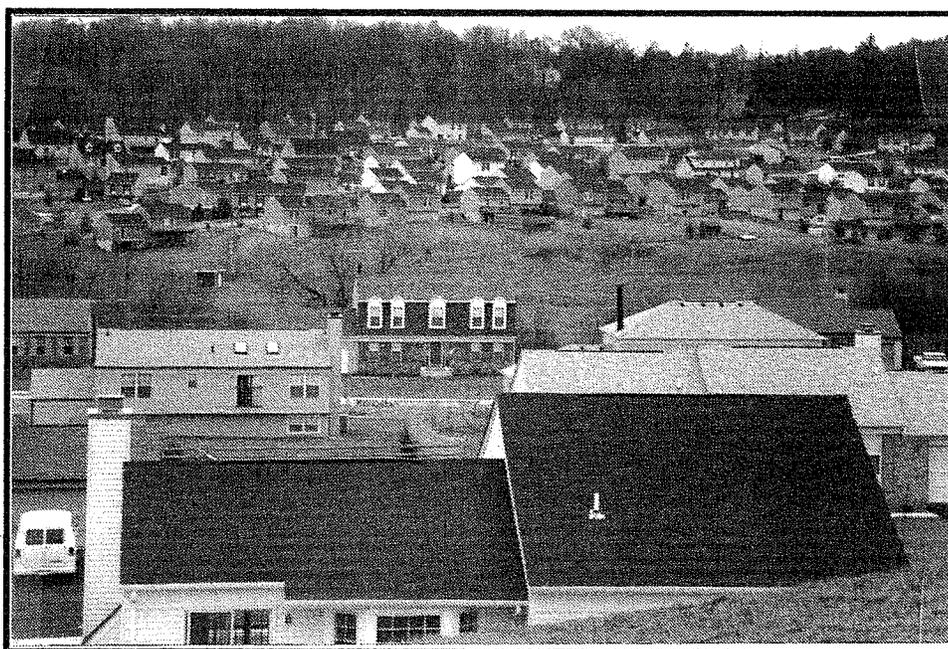
Older areas of Town are sources of pride to the community. Much of their attraction is

derived from the unique mix and diversity of land uses. Plans for new development are often the source of confrontation between officials, citizens and developers. Many times, controversy surrounding new development is exacerbated by the general concern for the resulting change of character of the community. This concern may be addressed by ensuring that the scale of new development is similar to the existing town or surroundings.

Recommended Action: Land use and zoning regulations should encourage patterns of development similar to the older areas of Town, and permit activities that are desirable and “good neighbors” yet not accommodated by current zoning categories.



**Figure 56: View of Older Development**



**Figure 57: View of New Development**

## 2. Connections:

As mentioned previously, a single zoning category is typically applied to large land tracts. Because the Town has relatively few zoning categories, the incompatibility of development in adjacent zones has become quite noticeable. To address this incompatibility a variety of "buffer" techniques have been developed, such as providing earth berms, fencing and landscape screens. However this practice results in further isolation of adjacent developments. The only connections that are sometimes provided between adjacent developments are sidewalks, but unfortunately the connecting roads which the sidewalks run along are often higher traffic, higher speed collector or arterial roads.

As a result of all this buffering and isolation, new development is not integrated into the "fabric" or pattern of the existing town. Some developments are so isolated that people who do not live in them do not know they exist. This indirect result of zoning policies is contradictory to the nature of a community.

Recommended Action: Zoning and supplemental regulations should foster community spirit by providing that all development is accessible, visible and interconnected, and that public places are designed within new development.

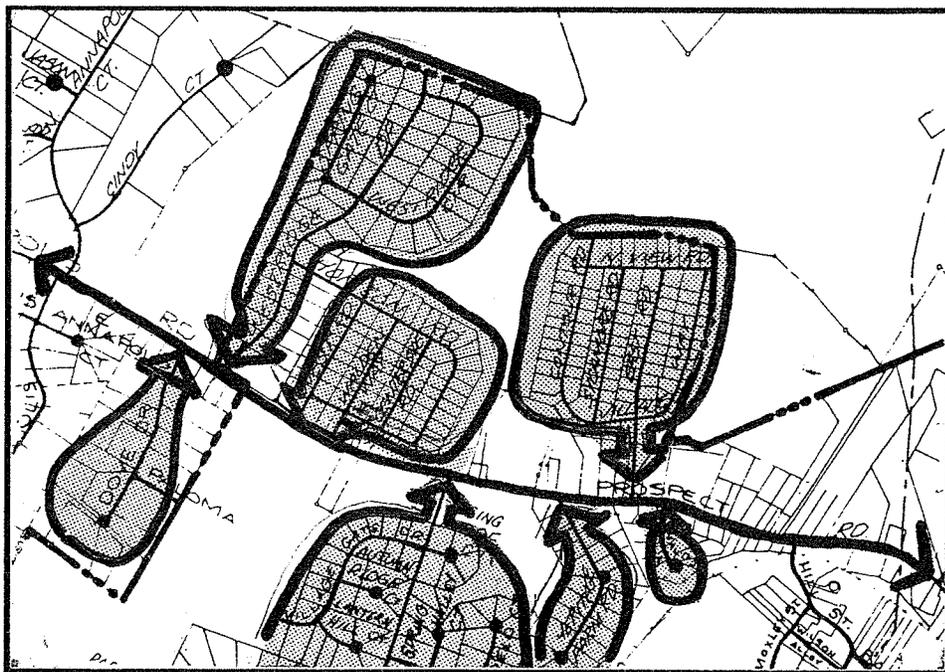
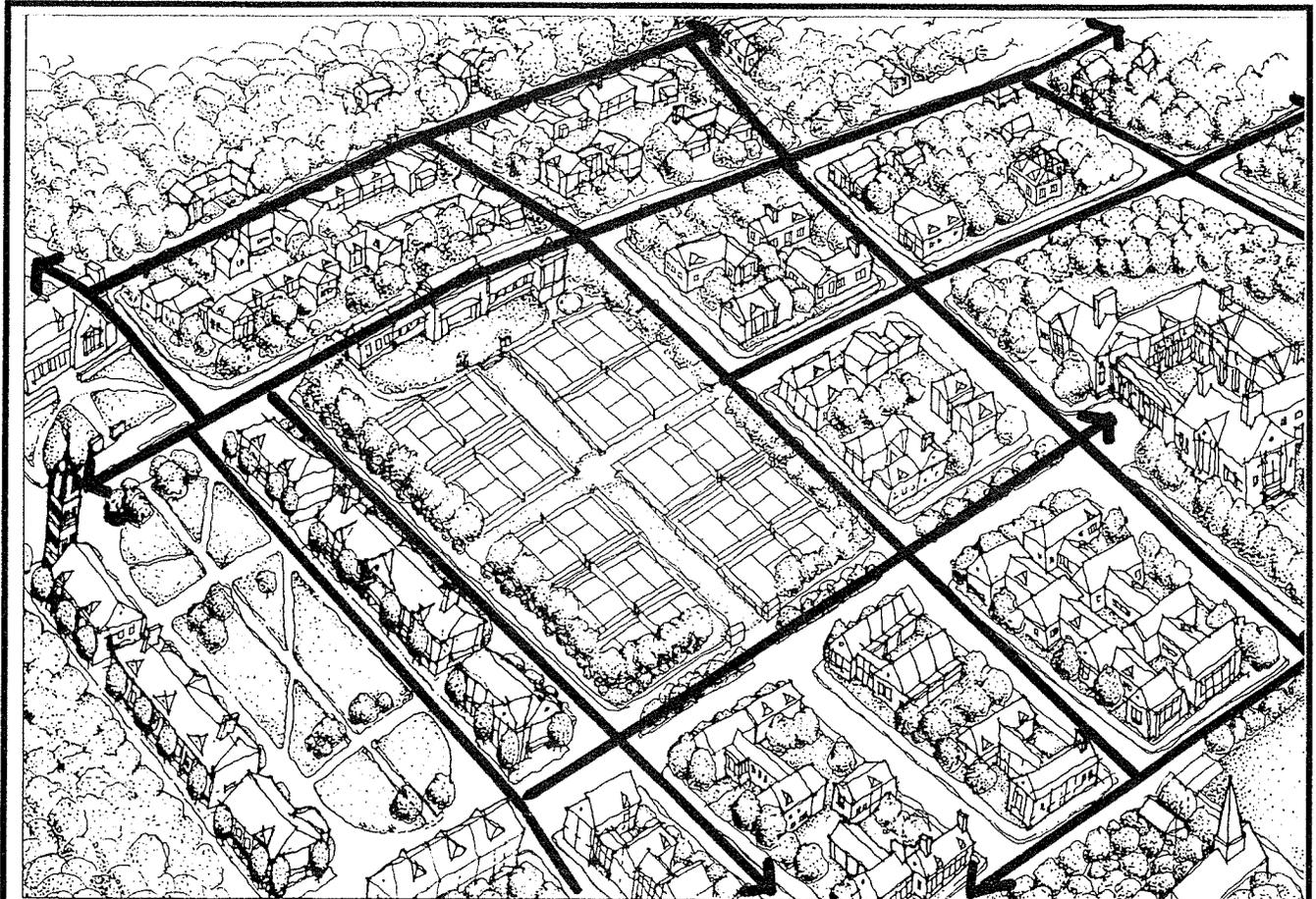


Figure 58: Plan of typically isolated new development



In this bird's eye sketch of the proposed center for a resort community, a grid of streets has been used to organize the community in an understandable way, providing a hierarchy

in which public buildings are grouped on more formal streets, while residential streets are smaller, more frequent, and more casual in character.

**Figure 59: View of Interconnected Street System**

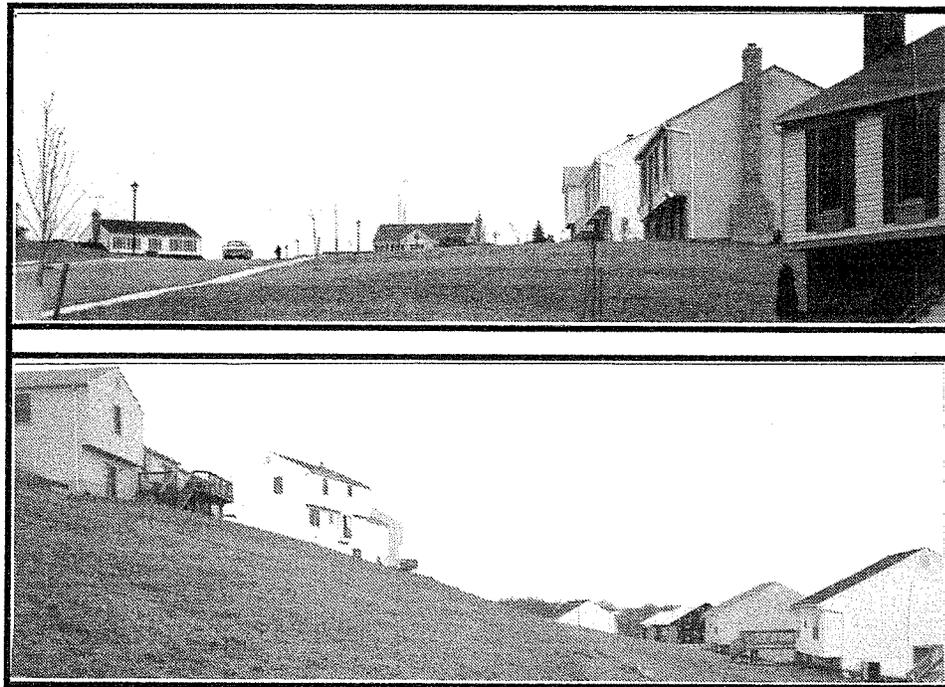
This sketch, taken from "A Design Primer for Cities and Towns" by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, illustrates how the interconnected street system typical of older development is being re-introduced in new development to achieve a traditional sense of community.

### 3. *Site Design and Zoning:*

While the zoning category determines permitted uses on a site, supplemental zoning regulations are applied that restrict the intensity and configuration of the development. Many of the current zoning regulations do not encourage proper site design. The permitted density of development in several residential zones cannot be achieved given the lot-size restrictions. As a result the site design process becomes mired in efforts by the developer to exact as many lots as possible given the lot size criteria, rather than a study of the most appropriate road configuration, open space provision, and individual lot layouts.

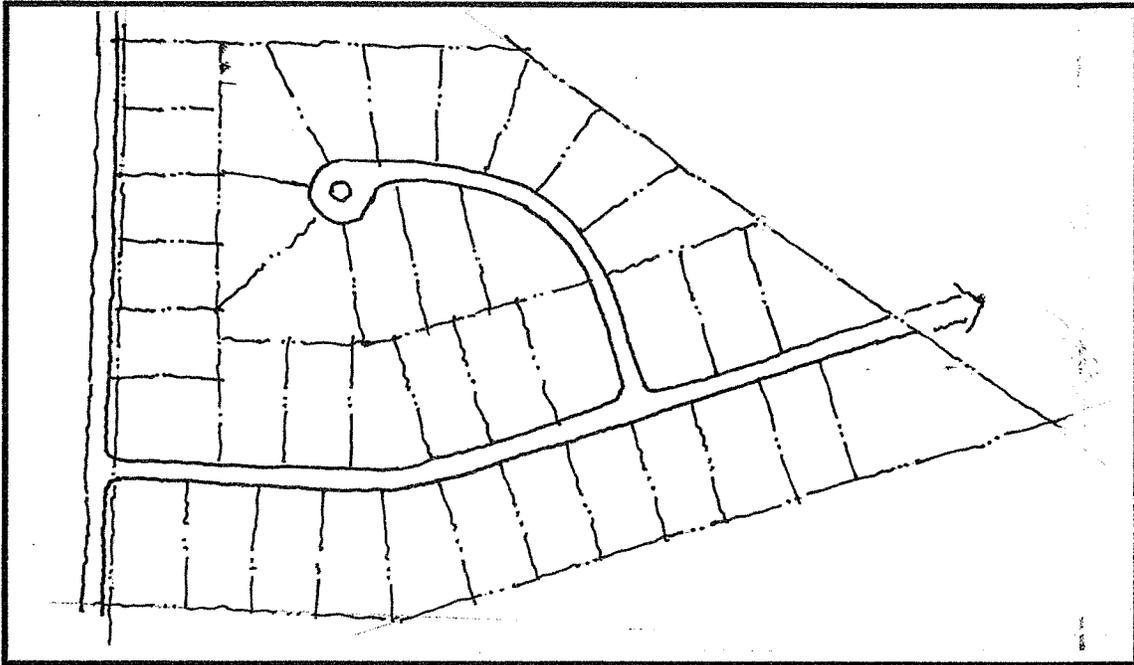
The type and intensity of land use is not always compatible with the site features of the parcel it was designated for. Properties with slopes of over 15% are difficult to develop given any land use without significant grading that destroys the existing topographical features, forests and other vegetation. Similarly, development in older areas of town are forced to conform to regulations applied to new development, rather than being forced to conform to the established character.

Recommended Action: Review and revise zoning regulations where they conflict with good site design practice.



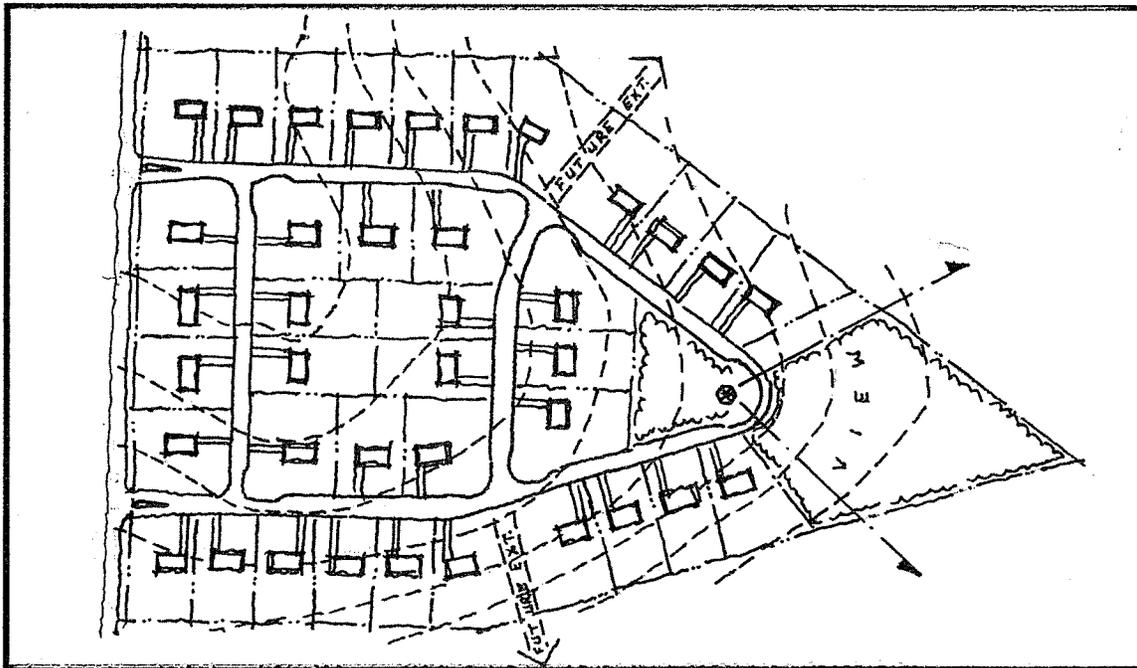
**Figure 60: Lot Grading on a Hillside.**

Zoning regulations for this lot required a 50 foot front yard setback and no more than a 3 foot drop in grade from the street to the first floor. Because the original site was a hillside, the front yard had to be leveled and the grade change was accommodated in the back yard.



**Figure 61: Original Plan for Nottingham Village**

This is a 20 acre site in the R-1 zone. Although the permitted density in the R-1 zone is 3 units per acre, the requirement that all lots average 18,000 sf. restricted the lot yield to 38 units on 20 acres, or about 2 units per acre.



**Figure 62: Final Plan for Nottingham Village**

A more desirable street pattern and open space area were provided. However, in order to maintain the 38 lots achieved in the original plan, numerous variances were needed permitting smaller lot area and setback criteria.

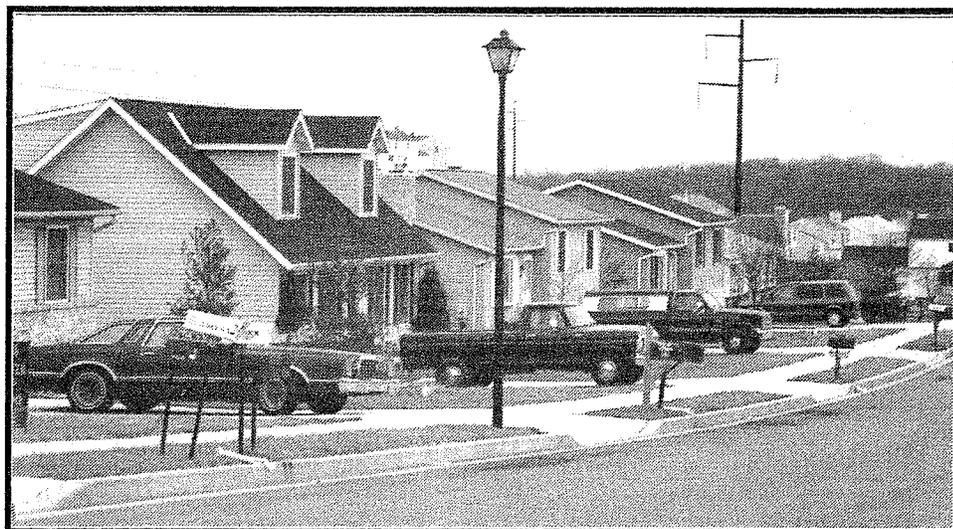
#### 4. Lot Design and Zoning:

Zoning criteria including lot size, setbacks, minimum lot width and parking requirements have a significant affect on the design of a building site.

Rather than provide minimum guidelines, the current zoning regulations tend to be very demanding, and most lots developed under the same zone are almost identical. The impact of this inflexibility on new residential lot design can be compared to the character of older residential development. On Main St. lot sizes range from 80,000 sf. to 12,000 sf. and less, and the average lot size is about 30,000 sf. In new R-1 zoned development the typical lots rarely exceed 22,000 sf. and are not allowed to be less than 14,000 sf., with most lots just meeting the 18,000 sf. average lot area restriction.

Parking is also handled differently as a result of zoning and subdivision regulations. Along the entire length of Main St. only a few houses have garages that are visible from the street. In new development, however, almost all houses have garages at the front of the house, and the garage doors open to the street. Some developments have only provided parking pads in the front yard. In older commercial development the buildings were close to the street and parking was to the side or rear. In new commercial development parking is almost always in front, in part to make use of the large building setback required. The resulting street character is significantly affected by the high visibility of parking accommodations.

Recommended Action: Zoning criteria should be revised to allow for better design options and result in attractive neighborhoods.



**Figure 63: Parking pads in front yards**

In this development parking “pads” were located in front of the houses, creating a streetscape dominated by views of cars parked in the front yards.



**Figure 64: Professional Office Conversion**

The zoning and subdivision regulations governing the conversion of this house to use as a professional office were not respectful of the existing character of the house, and the wide driveway, arrows and stormwater management detract from the original attributes.



**Figure 65: Entry Drive to Townhome Development**

New development is not permitted driveway access on collector roads, nor are alleys permitted to allow parking in the rear. As a result most new developments have the rear of the units facing the main entrance and primary public road.

## B. REVIEW OF EXISTING LAND-USE & ZONING

### 1. Existing Land-Use Plan:

The Existing Land-Use map illustrates the current status of development. The largest single land-use is vacant land, comprising 44% of the land within the existing Mt. Airy corporate limits. The second greatest land-use, detached housing, represents 28% of the total land area. This is followed by public and semi-public uses including the school grounds and the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Carnival Grounds, which make up about 11% of total land area. The remaining categories, attached housing, commercial, industrial and transportation R.O.W.'s comprise less than 10% of the total land area each.

The existing land-use map illustrates the imbalance between the amount of residential and non-residential development. Mt. Airy is still largely a bedroom community, although as discussed in Chapter 1, pressures for commercial development are increasing.

As of June 1992, there were 1,020 detached homes in Mt. Airy, and 401 townhomes and apartments. While attached housing represents 28% of the total dwelling units, it occupies only 7% of the land area devoted to residential use.

Commercial development has occurred at the south end of Town, near I-70 and Rt. 27, and consists of three shopping centers, miscellaneous commercial uses along E. Ridgeville Blvd. and the old Town center. No significant office or research and development uses exist within the Town, and only a few sites are developed with industrial uses.

The amount of vacant land within the Town presents both an opportunity and a challenge. Approximately half of the vacant land is immediately adjacent to developed areas and could be expected to develop within the next five to ten years, underscoring the importance of careful regulation and phasing of this growth. The great amount of land area available for development however, provides an opportunity to plan ahead and achieve goals set forth in previous chapters of this Comprehensive Plan.

## 2. Existing Zoning:

Mt. Airy has seven zoning categories. Four of these are residential, two are commercial and one is industrial.

Sixty-three percent of the land is zoned R-1, low density residential. Approximately 10% of the land is zoned R-2, medium density residential, and less than 1% is zoned R-3, high density residential. The fourth residential category, RR or rural reserve, is applied to 2% of the land area.

No property is zoned NC, neighborhood commercial. About 7% of the land is zoned CC, community commercial. The industrial zone is the second largest zoning designation and is applied to about 16% of the total land area.

There appears to be an imbalance between the zoning categories. Three of the zoning categories are virtually unused. This exacerbates the "buffer" phenomena as the four zoning categories that are predominant, R-1, R-2, CC, and I, produce four disparate land uses: detached housing, townhomes, commercial, and industrial.

While the Existing Zoning Plan reflects general trends consistent with the Existing Land Use Plan, it does not offer a true picture of future development. The existing zoning will regulate changes in use of already developed land, however development in these areas would nonetheless be minimal. The zoning of the vacant land is more informative, as this is a true indication of the amount and type of development that could occur.

## 3. Vacant Land Inventory-Existing Zoning:

The Vacant Land Inventory-Existing Zoning Plan better illustrates the impact of current zoning. Similar to the overall zoning plan, only a few of the seven categories are applied. No development is planned under the NC or R-3 zones. A negligible amount of land is zoned RR, Rural Reserve, and a small amount of land is zoned CC, Community Commercial.

Over 50% of the vacant land is zoned for R-1, low density residential development, and 34% of the land is zoned for industrial uses. This would result in a large proportion of larger lot, residential homes, and a predominance of industrial activity. The Town's industrial zoning is fairly inclusive, allowing uses ranging from offices to transportation terminals, and it is hard to predict if any of this property would be developed with desirable employee-intensive office/R&D uses given this zoning.

The following section further discusses the opportunities and concerns with how zoning is currently applied to vacant land.

Figure 66, Existing land Use

back of 66

Figure 67, Existing Zoning

back of 67

Figure 68, Vacant Land Inventory

back of 68

Figure 69  
**TOWN OF MOUNT AIRY**  
**VACANT LAND AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY**  
**MARCH 1, 1993**

<b>POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:</b>							
Map Key	Development Name	Zoning	Acreage	Status	Allow. D.U.	U & O's Issued	Lots Remain.
1		RR	4.23	INACTIVE	4		
2		RR	2.40	INACTIVE	2		
3	Nottingham Village	R-1	19.85	PPA *	38		
4		R-1	218.00	INACTIVE	381		
7		R-2	33.50	INACTIVE	210		
8		R-1	6.58	INACTIVE	11		
10		R-2	16.40	INACTIVE	98		
11		R-1	52.00	INACTIVE	91		
12		R-1	10.60	INACTIVE	18		
14		R-1	8.60	INACTIVE	15		
16		R-1	3.20	INACTIVE	5		
18		R-1	3.67	INACTIVE	6		
20		R-1	21.80	INACTIVE	36		
21		R-2	5.00	INACTIVE	30		
22		R-2	15.00	INACTIVE	90		
23		R-1	7.92	INACTIVE	13		
24		R-1	4.82	INACTIVE	8		
25		R-1	10.10	INACTIVE	17		
26		R-1	10.79	INACTIVE	18		
27		R-1	2.70	INACTIVE	4		
28		R-1	2.80	INACTIVE	4		
29		R-1	2.67	INACTIVE	4		
30	Mt. Airy Manors	R-2	4.59	INACTIVE	36		
31	Summerwood	R-1	32.82	UC	50	0	50
32	Twin Ridge Sect. II	R-1	93.00	PPA	155		
33	Village Gate III	R-1	38.00	UC	57		57
34	Wildwood Park	R-1	17.69	PPA	32		
35	Brinkley Property	R-2	1.44	FPA	6		
38		R-2		INACTIVE			
39		R-1	4.00	INACTIVE	7		
40	Village Gate Section I	R-1		UC	24	21	3
41	Village Gate Section II	R-1		UC	61	38	23
42	Twin Ridge Section I	R-1		UC	148	74	74
<b>SUB-TOTALS</b>			<b>654.17</b>		<b>1679</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>207</b>

<b>POTENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL &amp; MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT:</b>							
5		I	196.90	INACTIVE			
6		I	18.00	INACTIVE			
9		I	21.80	INACTIVE			
13		I	38.89	INACTIVE			
15		CC	13.00	INACTIVE			
17		CC	13.00	INACTIVE			
19		I	4.27	INACTIVE			
36	Twin Ridge Professional	I	49.51	PPA			
37	Twin Arch, Section I	I	29.38	FPA			
<b>SUBTOTALS:</b>			<b>384.75</b>				

**TOTAL VACANT LAND AREA = 1038.92 ACRES**

FPA = Final Plan Approval  
 PPA = Preliminary Plan Approval  
 UC = Under Construction

#### 4. *Review of Existing Zoning Categories:*

a. RR - Rural Reserve: The RR zone's stated purpose is to "encourage the conservation of agricultural and open land, and to assure the continuing agricultural potential and beauty of those areas at the periphery of the community..." It allows a density of 1 dwelling per acre, however it requires that the lot area for each unit be one acre, leaving no reserve for the "agricultural potential and beauty of those areas." Development of one-acre lots requires a great amount of infrastructure expense. As a result, the Town has not maintained land zoned RR and little development interest exists in this zone.

b. R-1 - Low Density Residential: The R-1 zone is the most extensively used. The stated purpose of this zone is "to promote the development of single-family residential neighborhoods free from land usage which might adversely affect such development." While the maximum permitted density is 3 units per acre, the minimum lot size of 18,000 sf. yields only about 1.75 units per acre. As the development yield is restricted by the lot layout rather than the permitted density, most R-1 subdivision layouts try to achieve as many lots as possible. Given this inflexibility, many sites are poorly designed and result in problems such as unusable yards or destroyed environmental features.

c. R-2 - Medium Density Residential: The stated purpose of the R-2 zone is "to provide an attractive, pleasant living environment at a sufficient density to maintain a high standard of physical maintenance and community service." The district encourages a mixture of high-density detached and attached dwelling units. The maximum permitted density is 6 units per acre. In spite of these community-spirited goals, many R-2 developments have occurred in isolated clusters with little usable common open space. The density is 4 times the density of R-1 developments, and R-2 developments look completely different than R-1 developments. Proposed development of R-2 zones adjacent to R-1 zones often causes confrontation. While most residents are not too happy about the site design that occurs under this zone, there is a realization that the Town must provide some less-costly housing opportunities.

d. R-3 - High Density Residential: The stated purpose of the R-3 zone is "to make the development of land having natural and locational advantages economically feasible by the variety of housing types, while continuing to encourage the provision of the basic amenities of an attractive and safe residential environment." The maximum permitted density is 8 units per acre. This zone is not currently applied to any vacant land, and is vehemently debated when applied for although it is only 25% more than the density of the R-2 zone.



**Figure 70: Typical R-1, Low-density residential development**



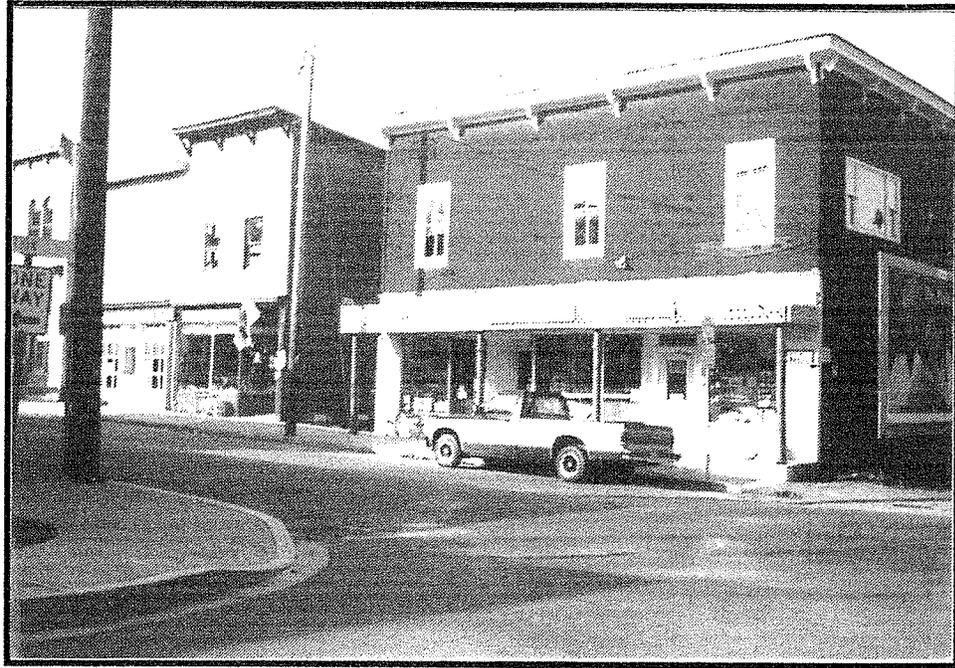
**Figure 71: Typical R-2, Medium-density residential development**

e. NC - Neighborhood Commercial: The stated purpose of the NC District is to “provide areas for a limited number of frequently used retail and service establishments in close proximity to the residents they serve. The uses permitted in this district are to be of such character that they serve the daily needs of the residents of a neighborhood area..., and provide for small, safe and attractive commercial areas that cater primarily to pedestrian traffic and are totally compatible with the surrounding residential environment.”

No property is currently zoned NC. The NC district is supposed to encourage pedestrian traffic, which provides opportunities for social interaction. However, all existing commercial areas are zoned CC, and the scale of many buildings and parking lots are very unfriendly to pedestrians.

f. CC - Community Commercial: The stated purpose of the CC district is to “provide for the shopping, service, office and entertainment establishments to service the needs of the entire community and surrounding area..., which cater primarily to the motoring public.” This zone has produced new development of large shopping centers and highway-related development such as fast food businesses. As stated in Chapter 1, businesses located in Mt. Airy serve a large region of four counties; however, this may be at the expense of smaller businesses that may not be able to compete with the expense of operating in regional shopping centers. Because CC development attracts a large volume of traffic, extra care must be taken to also allow pedestrians and bicyclists safe access to the businesses.

g. I - Industrial: The stated purpose of the Industrial zone is for “the location of both heavy commercial and light industrial uses which are basically similar in nature and too few in number to warrant a separate district.” A large proportion of vacant land is zoned for industrial use. While industrial uses are needed, some of the allowable uses such as transportation terminals, warehouses, manufacturing and automobile services would create a setting that is not desirable to office buildings, which are also only allowed in this district. Most of the stated industrial uses will create a relatively small number of jobs compared to office and R & D users, and industrial activity attracts heavy-equipment deliveries and must be carefully monitored to protect the environment. It may be more appropriate to distinguish between office research and development activities and industrial development, and encourage the more labor intensive office park developments.



**Figure 72: Commercial Development in the Downtown**



**Figure 73: Community Commercial Development,  
Twin Arch Shopping Center**

## C. PROPOSED ZONING CATEGORIES

Some redefinition of the zoning categories is recommended to achieve the most fundamental Comprehensive Plan goal, a sense of community. The text is intended to be descriptive, rather than specific as to lot size, or other quantifiable criteria. Specific criteria, such as yard requirements, parking, and allowable uses should be determined after the master plan adoption, and will necessitate a comprehensive rezoning.

### 1. *RR - Rural Reserve:*

The proposed RR zone should achieve the goal of assuring the "continued beauty of those areas at the periphery of the community." Rather than retain land for agricultural use the reserved land could be used to address several other current zoning and land-use problems.

The proposed RR zone would require a 50% dedication of open space. This zone would be applied to a property in order to preserve significant environmental features on a site, or to property that is relatively flat or otherwise usable for active recreation. This zone could help to establish Town boundaries by abutting open space to county land, and would discourage the "domino" syndrome of rezonings.

A total of 1.5 dwellings per acre are permitted, however they must be clustered on the remaining 50% of the property.

#### *RR, Rural Reserve Criteria:*

- \* *50% open space dedication*
- \* *1.5 du/gross acre, (total site area,) clustered on remaining 50% of the property*
- \* *approximately 10,000 sf. average lot size*

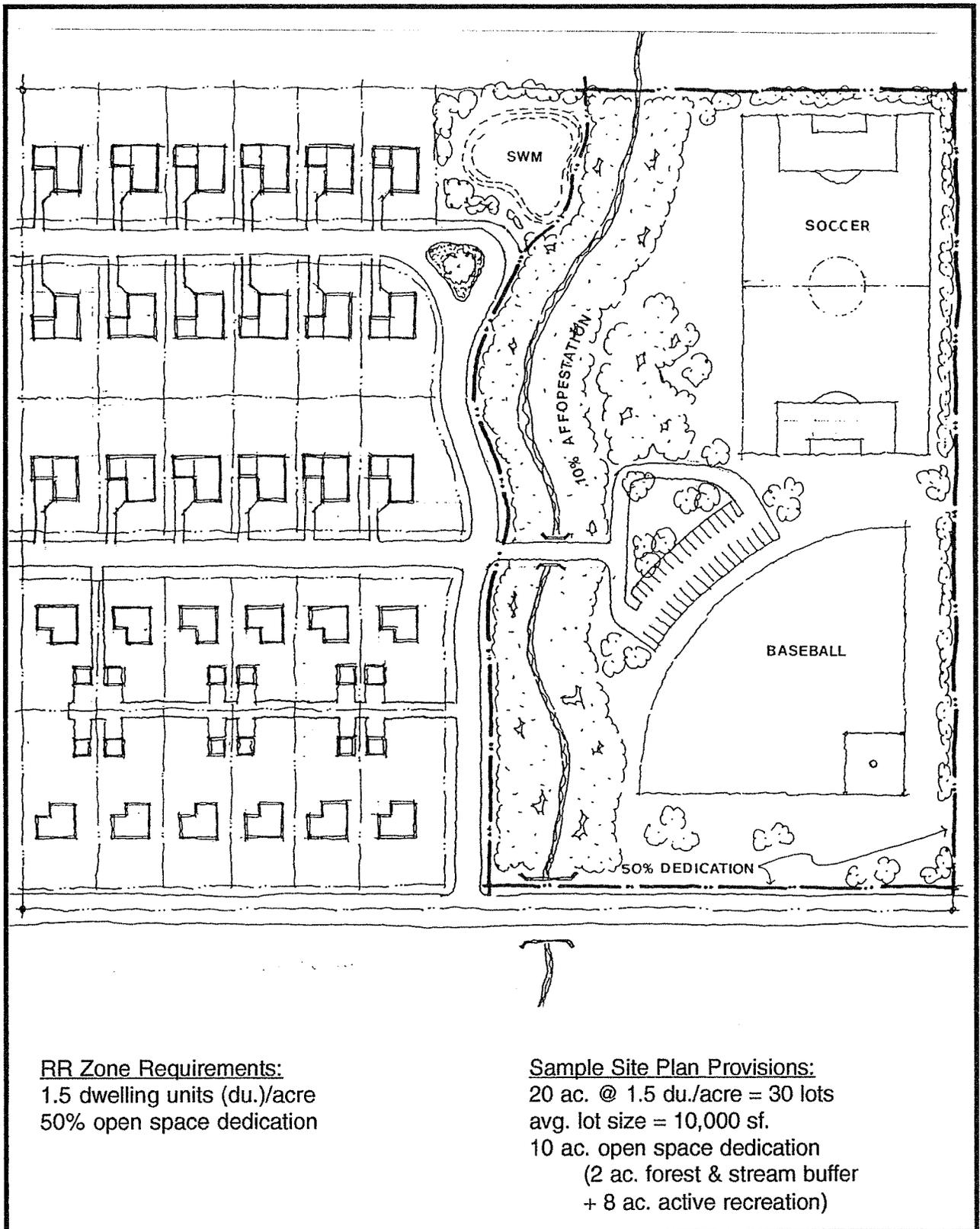


Figure 74: Rural Reserve Zone - Sample Site Plan

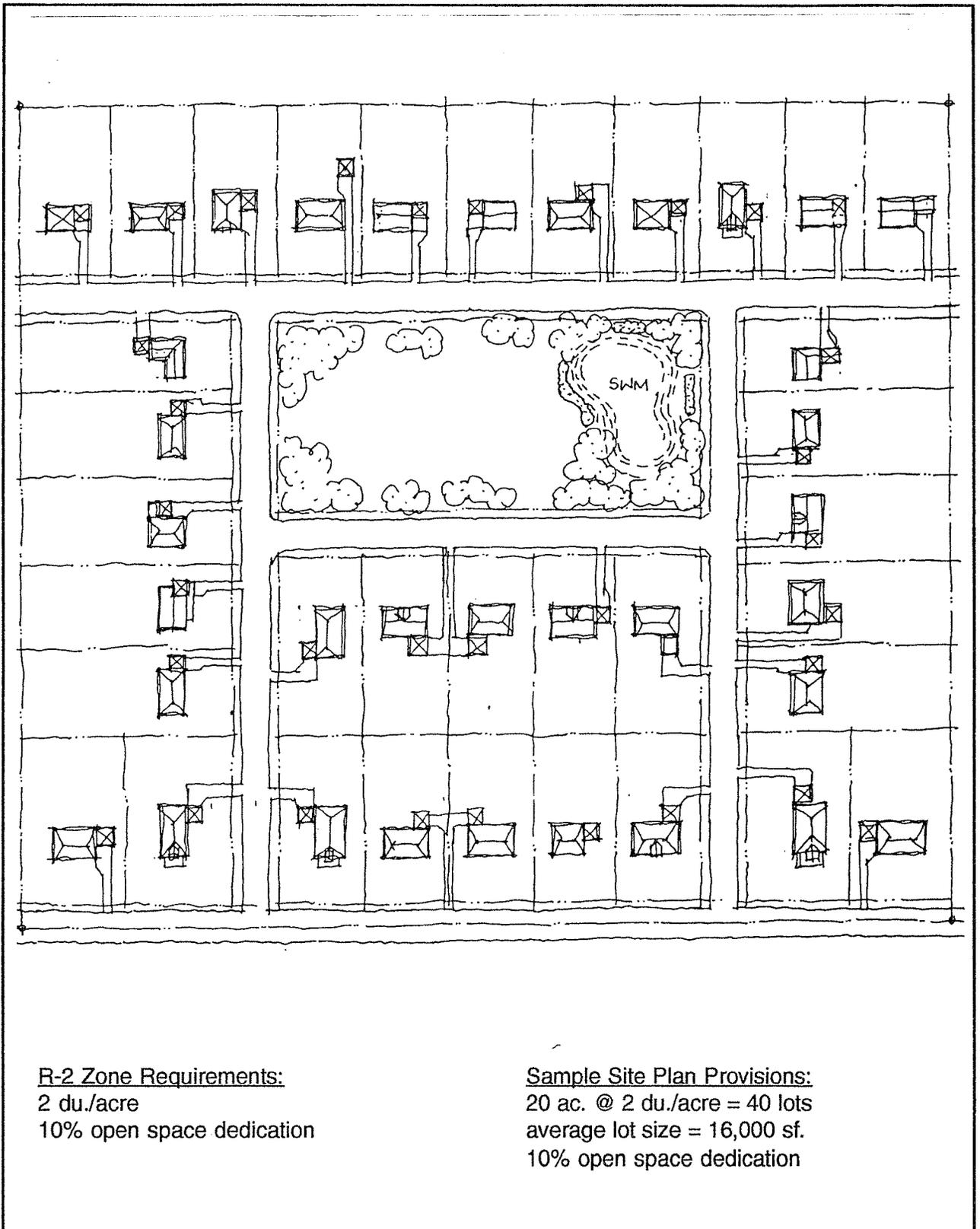
2. *R-2, Low-Density Residential:*

The low-density residential neighborhood, essentially the same as the R-1 zone, should be redefined to correct some current problems. The allowable density should determine the maximum allowable lot yield, and the minimum lot size should be minimal to allow for flexible design of a property. The maximum allowable density should be 2 units per acre, comparable to yield of the current R-1 zoning.

Some variation in lot sizes should be required for large developments. For any development over 50 lots, at least ten-percent of the lots should have a minimum 30,000 sf. lot size, and a minimum 20% of the lots should be small lots on approximately 8,000 s.f. lots.

*R-1, Low-Density Residential Criteria:*

- \* *2 du/net acre (less wetlands, steep slopes, floodplain)*
- \* *16,000 s.f. typical lot size (90' x 180')*
- \* *For developments yielding 50 or more lots:*
  - \* *10% lots @ minimum 30,000 s.f.*
  - \* *20% lots @ 8,000 to 10,000 s.f.*



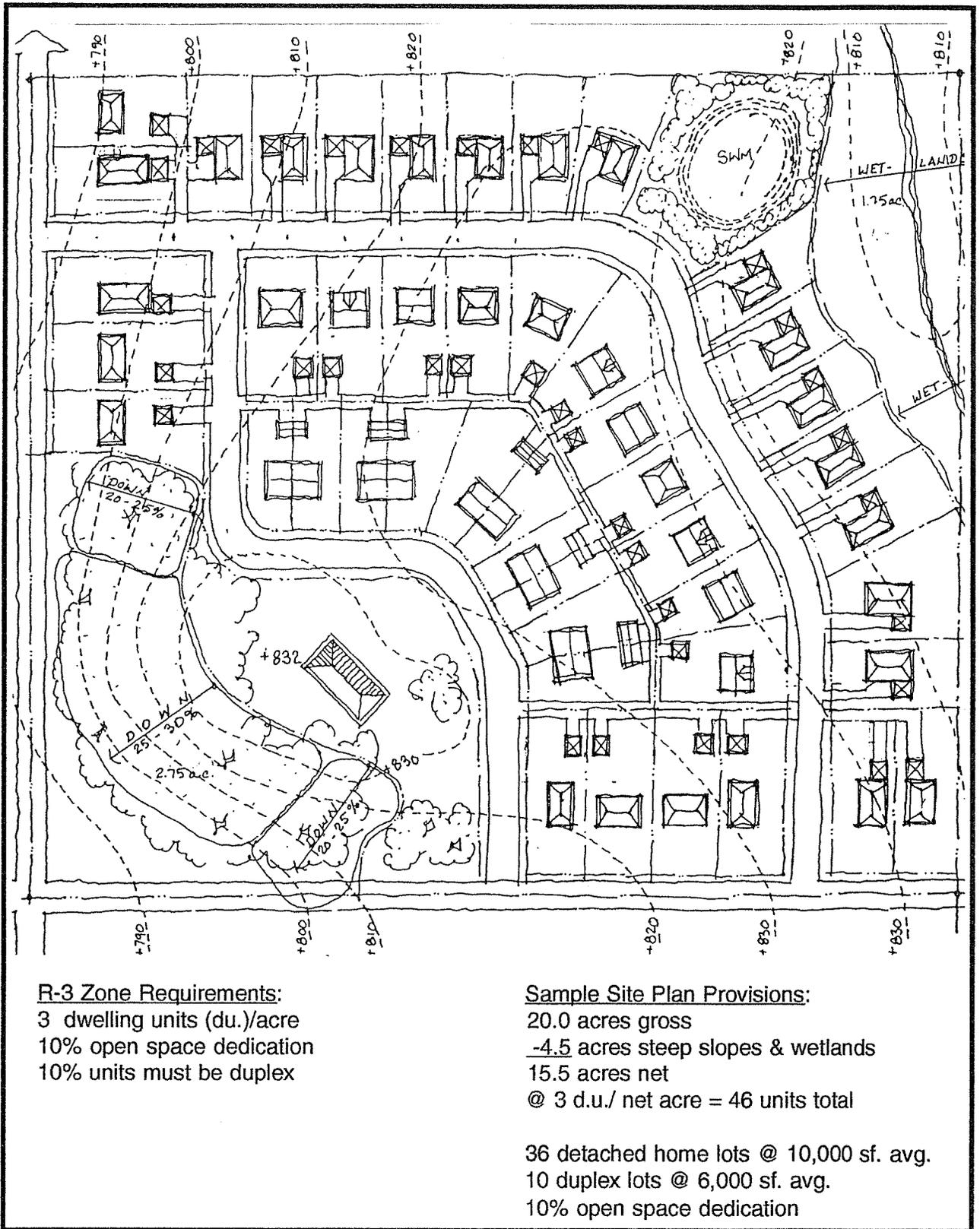
**Figure 75: Low-Density Residential Zone - Sample Site Plan**

3. *R-3, Medium-Density Residential:*

Rather than the substantial increase from the current R-1 density of 1.75 units per acre to the current R-2's density of 6 units per acre, the medium density residential areas should be visually compatible adjacent to the low density housing. This can be done by allowing small lot housing or duplex lots in the medium density zone. The suggested maximum allowable density should be 3 units per acre. Parking in this zone may be from the front, although it must be stipulated that all garages, carports or parking pads must be located further back than the building front so that garages do not dominate the streetscape. Alleys may be considered better alternatives to frontal approach driveways, allowing parking and trash pick-up to be removed from the streetscape.

*R-3, Medium-Density Residential Criteria:*

- \* *3.0 du/net acre (less wetlands, steep slopes, floodplain)*
- \* *10,000 sf. typical lot size*
- \* *70' x 140' approximate lot size*
- \* *10% d.u. min. shall be duplex*



**Figure 76: Medium-Density Residential Zone - Sample Site Plan**

5. *R-5, Neighborhood Center:*

The "Neighborhood Center" will provide a pedestrian friendly residential environment that incorporates a site for future public-use. The recommended maximum size of a Neighborhood Center District is approximately 20 acres. The permitted uses would include a variety of housing types as well as the public-use site. A total of 5 du/acre would be allowed, but must be provided as a mix of the permitted housing types. A 10% land dedication for the public-use site would also be required.

Small lot detached homes are required, but must be no less than 30% of the allowable lot yield. These lots may be a minimum of 6,000 s.f.

Duplex or semi-detached homes are permitted, but may be no more than 40% of the total allowable lot yield.

Attached homes up to 4 units in a row are permitted, but may be no more than 40% of the total allowable lot yield.

A public-use dedication to the Town of 10% of the net developable acreage is required. This land is to be used by the Town for a park or other town-sponsored uses, or may be used at the discretion of the Town to locate a needed public or semi-public use such as day care, community or recreation centers, non-profit organizational centers, or churches.

Proper organization of the site is necessary to achieve the goals of the neighborhood center. The public-use site should be located at or near the most prominent and accessible location of the property. The different housing types should be arranged on the site so that the new development is compatible with adjacent housing types. The proposed detached lot homes should abut existing detached homes. Transitions between housing types should happen within the Neighborhood Center development, and the streets between the housing types should be interconnected.

Similar to proper site design considerations, the design of the different building types must be compatible. Design guidelines may be required of the developer and approved by the Planning Commission.

*NC, Neighborhood Center Criteria:*

1. *Allowable lot yield is 5 du/net acre with the following required mix of lot types:*
  - a. *detached, not less than 30% of the total lot yield*
  - b. *semi-detached, not more than 40% of the total lot yield*
  - c. *attached, not more than 40% of the total lot yield*
  
2. *Open Space Dedication: 10% net acreage*



4. R-7, High-Density Residential:

The high density residential zone should be reserved for townhome or apartment development. The maximum density is recommended to be 7 units per acre.

Because higher density housing does not require deep, level front or rear yards, well designed units can negotiate sites that slope up to 15%. On this sample 10-acre site, townhouses step down the sloping hillside, leaving 20% of the site as undisturbed open space:

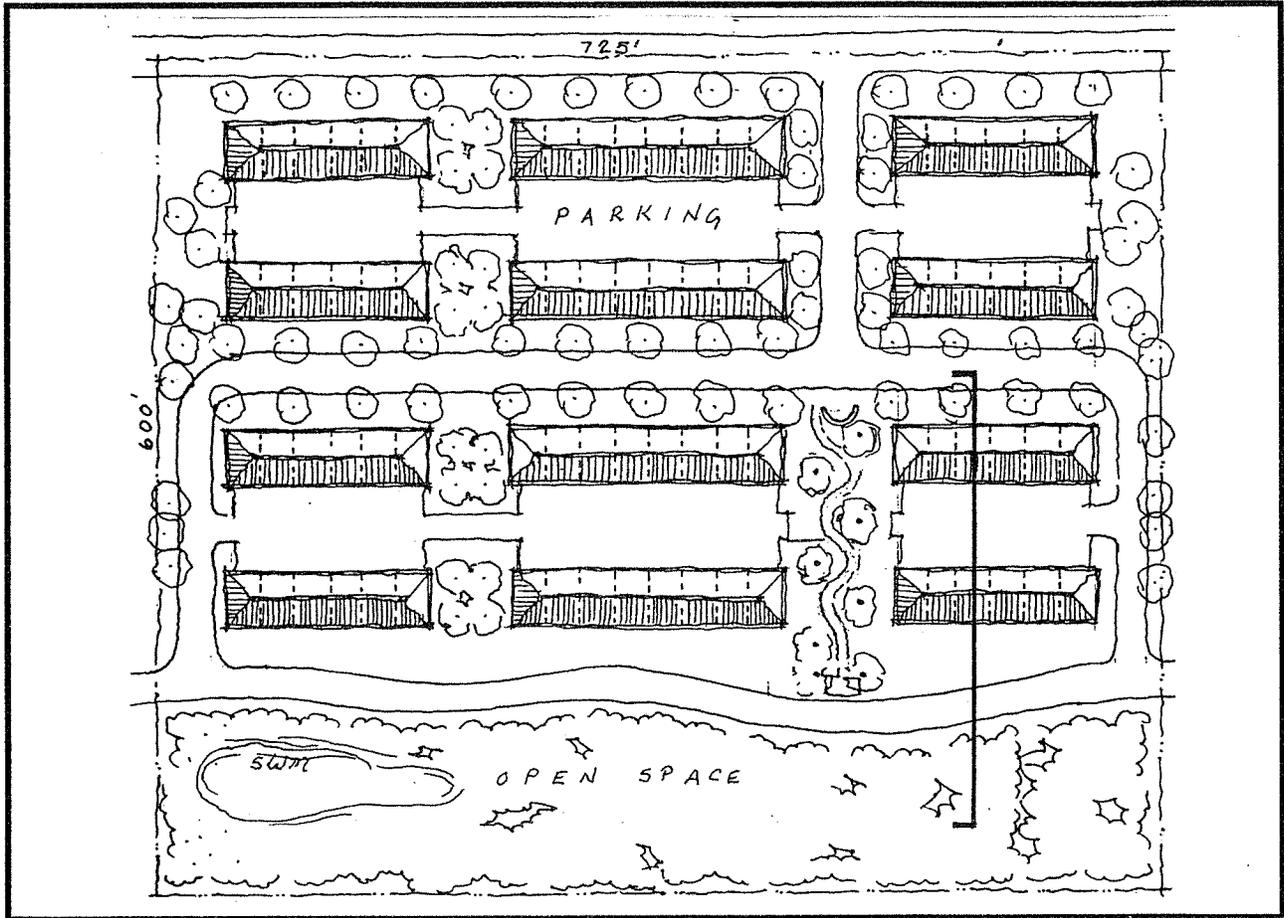


Figure 78: High-Density Residential Zone, sample site

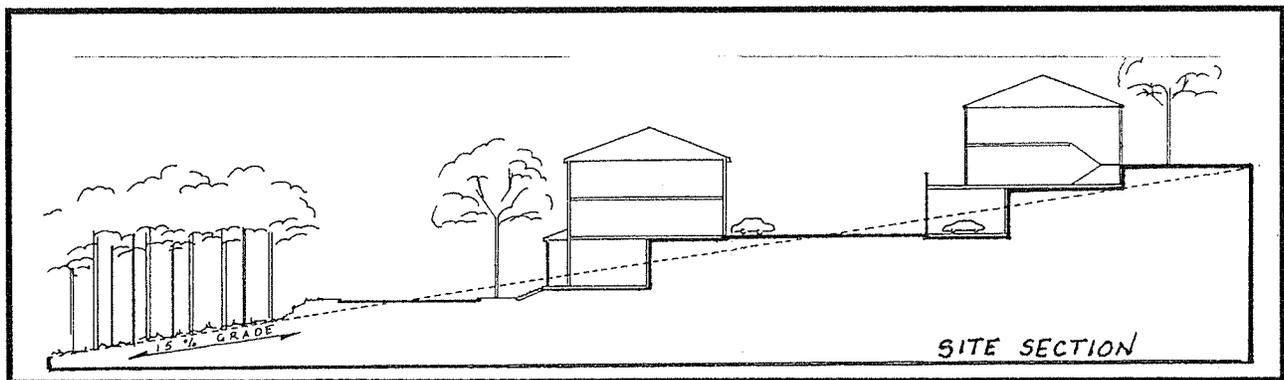


Figure 79: Sectional view of sample site

6. *CC - Community Commercial:*

Community Commercial development would allow uses similar to the existing CC zone. Different site design criteria must be developed to ensure compatibility to the existing Town. For example, currently large commercial sites are set back considerably from the street and display an enormous parking area. Sidewalks are located between a large parking lot and a busy road. These sites break physical and visual connections with the community. As an alternative, a percentage of commercial building frontage should be located close to the roads, providing an interesting streetscape perceived as safe and inviting by the pedestrian. Office buildings should be allowed in the CC district.

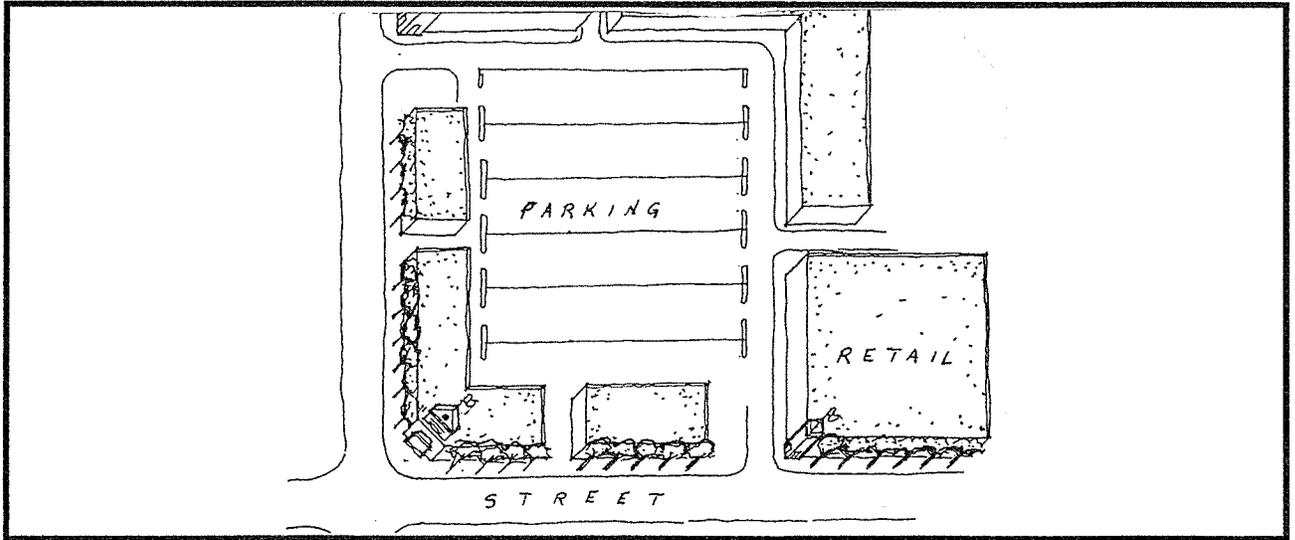


Figure 80: Commercial Site Plan illustrating building to the street edge

7. *O - Office District:*

A district must be developed to specifically attract clean, employee-intensive businesses. Property located close to I-70 and Rt. 27 is equally attractive to office and commercial activity: however, given current zoning and market demands, these prime sites would probably develop with highway and regional service retail. Some of this high-visibility land should be reserved for office buildings, which are likely to be more attractive than most large scale retail developments. This zone should be primarily restricted to office buildings and hotels or inns, but may allow a small percentage of related uses such as sit-down restaurants, or small office service and supply shops.

8. *I - Industrial District:*

The existing industrial district is sufficient, however one minor change should be made: transportation terminals should not be a permitted use but should require a special exception given the potential traffic impacts. Potential industrial development is the least compatible with residential development and should not be located immediately adjacent to residential areas. Industrial development should also be restricted to areas away from potential well sites and priority water-recharge areas.

## D. 1994 COMPREHENSIVE LAND-USE PLAN

### 1. *Land-Use Categories:*

The "1994 Comprehensive Land Use Plan" is designed to achieve many inter-related master plan goals and anticipates utilization of the proposed zoning categories.

The Open Space and Public Use category is applied to land currently used as such, including school grounds and the Town parks, and is applied to land along the proposed linear park and South Branch of the Patapsco River. Where land is identified as Open Space or Public Use but not currently developed, the dedication can be achieved through application of the proposed Rural Reserve or R-1 zones.

The Low-Density Residential category corresponds to either the Rural Reserve or R-2 zone. Approximately 1,250 acres are in this zone, including 576 acres that are currently undeveloped. It is anticipated that future development according to the proposed RR or R-2 zone densities assuming an average 1.75 du/acre yield would result in approximately 1,108 dwellings. One of the primary targets for the Rural Reserve zone is the land adjacent to the proposed rail-to-trail which includes significant wooded areas, streams, and a large pond.

The Medium-Density Residential category corresponds to either the proposed R-3 or R-5/Neighborhood Center zones. A total of 237 acres are in this zone, and approximately 108 acres are currently undeveloped. It is anticipated that future development according to the proposed zoning categories may yield approximately 481 dwellings.

The High-Density Residential category corresponds to the proposed R-7 zone. Only one site is proposed to be developed as high-density residential, which could be in the form of townhomes or apartments. This property, labeled 5 on the Vacant Land Inventory, Figure 68 on page 83, is currently zoned industrial but abuts the proposed recreation trail. The 40 acres proposed for high-density residential occupies a hillside that overlooks the trail and the valley to the north. It is more appropriate for this area to be developed residentially than industrially since it is adjacent to the trail. In addition, industrial development would necessitate leveling the hillside, destroying the character of this area.

The Commercial category corresponds to the proposed Commercial zone, and is concentrated near I-70 and Rt. 27. It is strongly recommended that future regional commercial development not be permitted north of E. Ridgeville Blvd along Rt. 27. Many other towns have let substantial amounts of commercial development occur along their bypass roads, resulting in clogged arterial roads with short-trip, high-volume traffic.

The Employment category corresponds to either the Industrial zone or the proposed Office zone. Properties # 5 and 9 are primary candidates for the Office zone. Employees of future development on property #5 could walk to downtown businesses, and employees of development on property #9 would be immediately adjacent to several housing types to the north and east, permitting some workers to walk or bike to their office.

Figure 81: Land Use Plan

back of Figure 81

2. *Estimated Residential Development:*

Under the 1994 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, residential development on currently vacant land is estimated to be distributed as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>(Zone)</u>	<u>avg. density</u>	<u># units</u>
<i>Low-Density</i>	<i>RR, R-2</i>	<i>1.75 du/ac</i>	<i>1,108</i>
<i>Med. Density</i>	<i>R-3, R-5</i>	<i>4 du/ac</i>	<i>481</i>
<i>High-Density</i>	<i>R-7</i>	<i>7 du/ac</i>	<u><i>320</i></u>
<b>TOTALS:</b>			<b><i>1,909</i></b>

Within the residential zones some variation of lot sizes is proposed, further varying the unit types that would be available.

If the same vacant land were developed under its current zoning, an estimated 1,670 units could be built. The 1994 Comprehensive Land Use Plan may marginally increase the residential build-out by about 15% over the potential build-out of existing zoning. This increase results from additional acreage that is designated for residential development.

## E. FUTURE ANNEXATION AREAS

In Chapter I ultimate town boundaries were identified. These boundaries were established as a result of surrounding county development policies, environmental features, and road configurations. Subsequent chapters identified opportunities available within these areas. The accompanying map, "Future Annexations Areas" and following text summarize issues that are involved in the decision of whether or not to annex a property, what the proposed use of the property should be, and what priority each property would command.

### 1. *Future Annexations - Opportunities and Constraints:*

Between the current Town limits and the ultimate Town boundaries approximately 1,500 acres exists. Much of this land is identified for residential development by either Frederick or Carroll Counties at densities higher than that which would normally be permitted in the county, with the intent that the Town will someday annex this property.

There is no obligation on the part of the Town to annex additional property. If a decision to annex additional land is made it should be a conscious decision by the Town to permit additional development within the corporate limits.

If the Town chooses to annex additional property, it should do so with the knowledge that some potential annexation properties offer more advantages than others, and the sequence of annexation should be considered so that services aren't unnecessarily burdened by low-priority development.

The accompanying map, "Future Annexations Areas," breaks the future annexations into parcels, and illustrates the opportunities or constraints of each land area. Opportunities a parcel may offer include additions to the planned road or open space networks, potential well sites or protection of well recharge areas, conditions that make a property ideal for a needed land-use, and other significant features. Constraints may include poor accessibility or undue burdens on the existing road network, extreme environmental conditions that make the property unsuited for certain types of development, and similar factors that may limit potential use of a property. Constraints do not suggest that a property should not be annexed, but should influence potential land use decisions, and may affect the prioritization of annexations. The following discusses the merits of each parcel:

Parcel A: Parcel A includes the 89 acre property owned by the Town, and the 25 acre property between Prospect Rd. and the Town property. The property between Prospect Rd. and the Town property is high on a ridge, and the wooded area along its western side would provide a nice Town boundary. This property also offers a potential road access to the highest and most level area of the Town property. It is bounded on three sides by low density residential development, and should be developed in the same fashion.

Parcel B: Parcel B includes land northwest of the Town in Frederick County. Some of this property would include the planned Old Annapolis Road extension, which would serve as the northern Town boundary. The southern edge of this parcel borders the planned open space network and could significantly contribute to this feature. If this property were to

develop the option should be maintained to provide a major road connecting Buffalo Road to Rising Ridge Road. Otherwise, traffic generated by this development would be forced through the older areas of the Town. Much of this land is relatively flat and unwooded, making it ideal for active recreation purposes and fairly easy to develop. A significant well, (300,000+ gpd.,) has been identified on this parcel near the intersection of Buffalo Road and Old Bohn Rd. Given the distance from I-70 and Rt. 27, it is recommended that this property be primarily residential.

Parcel C: Parcel C contains approximately 250 acres and is entirely within Carroll County. The northern edge of this parcel would include the planned Old Annapolis Road extension. This property has no major planned roads through it. One minor well was identified on this site although it is believed that it is in the same aquifer as the well on Parcel B and may not be needed if Parcel B is annexed. The property is almost completely unwooded and is moderately sloping down from east to west. Most of the property is highly visible from the approach to town from Buffalo Rd. Development of this property would create a significant amount of traffic on North Main St. and Watersville Rd. It is recommended that this property be primarily low-density residential if annexed.

Parcel D: Parcel D contains approximately 32 acres and is within Carroll County. This long parcel is sandwiched between N. Main St. and Rt. 27, and slopes down from west to east. It is therefore highly visible from Rt. 27. A planned road would extend through this parcel parallel to N. Main St. Any development of this area would add to traffic on N. Main St. as there is no access directly to Rt. 27. Development of this parcel should be primarily residential, however the northern end of this parcel, where Main St. meets Rt. 27, could support small commercial development.

Parcel E: Parcel E consists of approximately 300 acres and is within Carroll County. It borders Rt. 27 and Watersville Road. Some residential development has already occurred on Boetler Rd. If this property is developed a road is proposed to link Rt. 27 at N. Main St. to Boetler Rd. Some of this area is low-lying and may be floodplain or wetlands. The property abutting Watersville Rd. is relatively flat, and would be ideal recreation land. A potential well site is located on this property. Development of this parcel should be primarily low-density residential.

Parcel F: Parcel F contains approximately 200 acres and is within Carroll County. This parcel consists of right-of-way for Rt. 27 and one large dairy farm. This property is relatively level, and is highly visible from Rt. 27, Watersville Rd. and the proposed recreation trail. Two major roads are proposed through this property. One runs north to south, connecting Center St. extended to Watersville Rd. The other runs east to west, connecting the new road to residential property already within the Town. These roads are necessary to help interconnect neighborhoods on this side of Rt. 27 and limit unnecessary traffic on Rt. 27. No well sites are identified on this property, although the western edge of this property is within the recharge area for well #6.

Parcel G: Parcel G contains approximately 30 acres and is located in lowland adjacent to the South Branch of the Patapsco River. Much of this property may be in floodplain or wetlands. This area would be an important piece of the open space network. Howard County has plans to purchase easements on the other side of the river to protect its natural state. Some potential well sites have been identified in this area. No development is recommended on this parcel.

Parcel H: Parcel H contains approximately 120 acres and is within Carroll County. It is moderately hilly, and borders the South Branch of the Patapsco River. There are several significant wooded areas within the parcel. There are many large residential parcels on this lot, and a request for annexation of this area is not expected in the near future. Two potential well sites are identified within this parcel, and the Twin Arch bridge borders the south-east end of the site. A short but important leg of a planned road crosses the north-west corner of the parcel. Recommended future land-uses are primarily residential, although commercial or industrial uses may be considered if the surrounding properties develop with non-residential uses.

Parcel I: Parcel I is entirely within Frederick County and contains approximately 180 acres. It is currently farmed although a significant wooded hillside exists on the west side of the property. The site is visible from I-70, and could be readily accessed by the planned extension of Rising Ridge Road to Rt. 27. No wells have been identified on the site, however the property lies within the recharge area for town well #7. This property has good potential for office and related uses given its visibility from I-70 and excellent accessibility from Rt. 27.

## 2. *Future Annexation Plan:*

Parcels A, B, F, and I offer the most opportunities and least constraints. Parcel I could provide the highest priority planned road, Rising Ridge Road Extended, and provide additional office development. Parcel F includes a central link to the planned recreation trail, and an important road network accessing the property to its west. Parcel B also would contribute to the open space network, and could contribute a significant well.

Of the nine parcels identified, only one, Parcel I, is a good candidate for additional employment land-use. The remaining eight parcels are all recommended for low to moderate density residential development.

Site specific conditions, including slopes, floodplain, wetlands, forested areas, streams, accessibility, viewsheds, and similar characteristics should be thoroughly considered before any annexation and zoning decision is made.

The Town has a large amount of vacant land already within its limits. It is recommended that any future annexation decisions weigh the ability of existing services to handle the growth impacts of all currently incorporated vacant property as well as the annexation parcel. It is recommended that no significant, annexations occur until the sewer treatment plant is expanded.

Figure 82, Future Annexation Areas

Back of Figure 82

## V. BALANCE GROWTH AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

Many jurisdictions have recognized that public infrastructure or facilities are not always capable of handling the impact of new development. Public agencies do not or cannot always provide increased services needed by new development, and new development does not always mitigate the problems it may cause.

The responsibility for maintaining acceptable levels of service rests with the governing body, who must either limit growth so services need not be expanded, or assure that service levels keep pace with development.

The following section reviews public infrastructure and facilities and makes recommendations for their continued adequate services. Issues reviewed include:

- A. Transportation
- B. Water System
- C. Sewer System
- D. Schools
- E. Parks & Recreation
- F. Emergency Services
- G. Other Public Facilities and Services
- H. Adequate Public Facilities Regulations

## A. TRANSPORTATION

### 1. *Development of the Town's Street System:*

The Town's street network that existed in 1970 is responsible for handling the majority of traffic to and within Town today. In 1970 there were seven streets that provided traffic circulation within Mt. Airy: Main St., Ridgeville Blvd., Ridge Rd., Park Ave., Prospect Rd., Buffalo Rd., and Watersville Rd. These older streets were constructed with lesser building setbacks, are often in need of repair, and do not meet today's engineering criteria.

While new streets are built to higher standards, often these new streets only provide access within new developments. Few streets have been constructed since 1970 that contribute to the Town's street system. Mt. Airy's population increased from 1,830 in 1970 to 3,964 in 1990, while only two new streets, Route 27, which is constructed, and Rising Ridge Road, which is under construction, contribute to traffic circulation in Mt. Airy. In addition, both Rising Ridge Road and Route 27 are planned to alleviate regional traffic through Town rather than accommodate the Town's local traffic patterns.

In order to properly plan for current and increased traffic on the Town's street system, and to use the street system to foster community character as discussed in Chapter III, the Town should ardently pursue the construction of an interconnected street system. To facilitate this process, the Town may develop a Street Improvement Program, and adopt a Major Street Plan.

The Town should begin to explore other transportation options, including commuter transportation by carpool/vanpool or mass transit, and coordinate hiker/biker paths proposed as an element of the Parks and Recreation Plan to serve as a transportation option within Town.

### 2. *Street Improvement Program:*

The Street Improvement Program should include a detailed plan of all Town streets. Each street should be described as to its physical condition, any problems or attributes of the street, and recommendations for future improvement. All elements of the street should be considered, including the appropriate right-of-way and pavement width, sidewalks, lighting, storm drainage, signage, landscaping and building setbacks. Improvements should be prioritized and a schedule for implementation outlined.

Based upon the above analysis, a plan to finance and construct improvements should be developed. The financing plan should be based on the desired completion dates of priority projects. For example, if three priority roads projects need to be completed within a ten-year period, the funding sources should be sufficient to accomplish this within that time constraint.

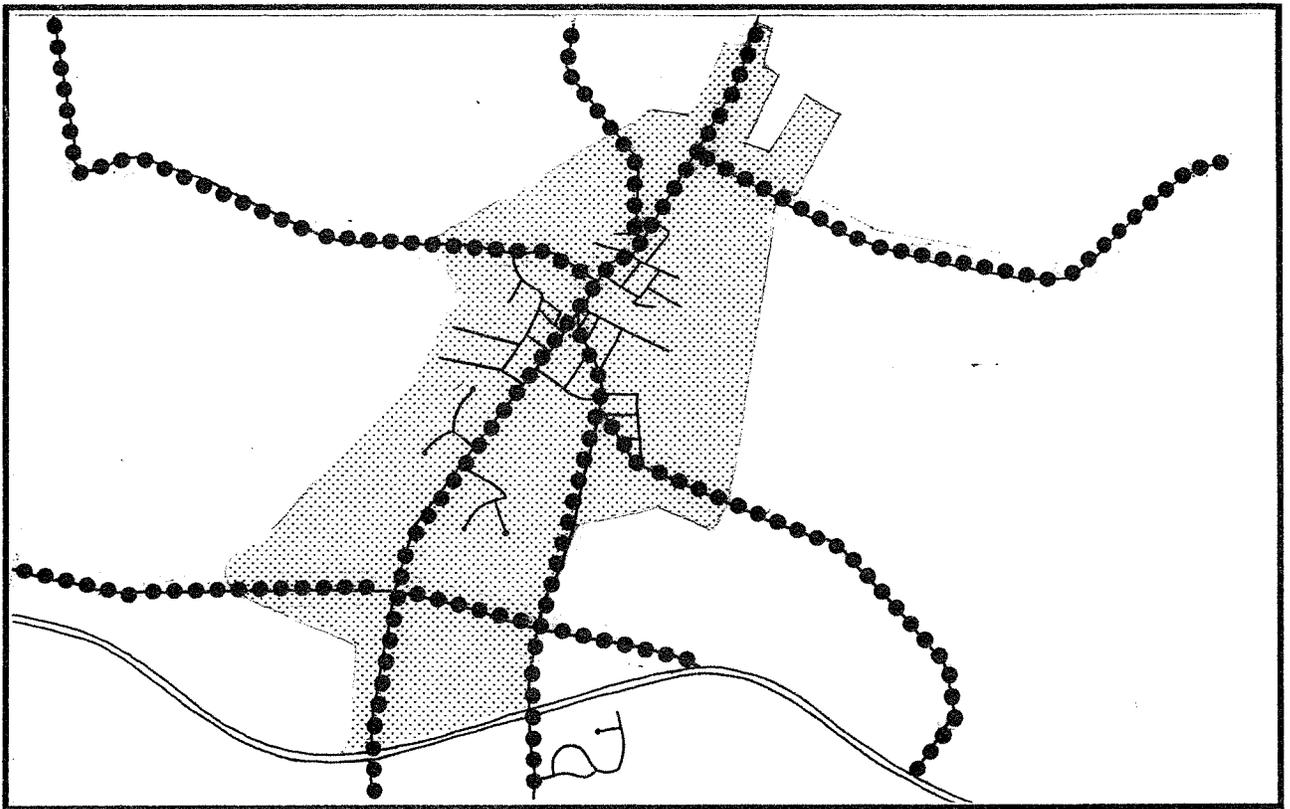


Figure 83: Primary Street Network in 1970

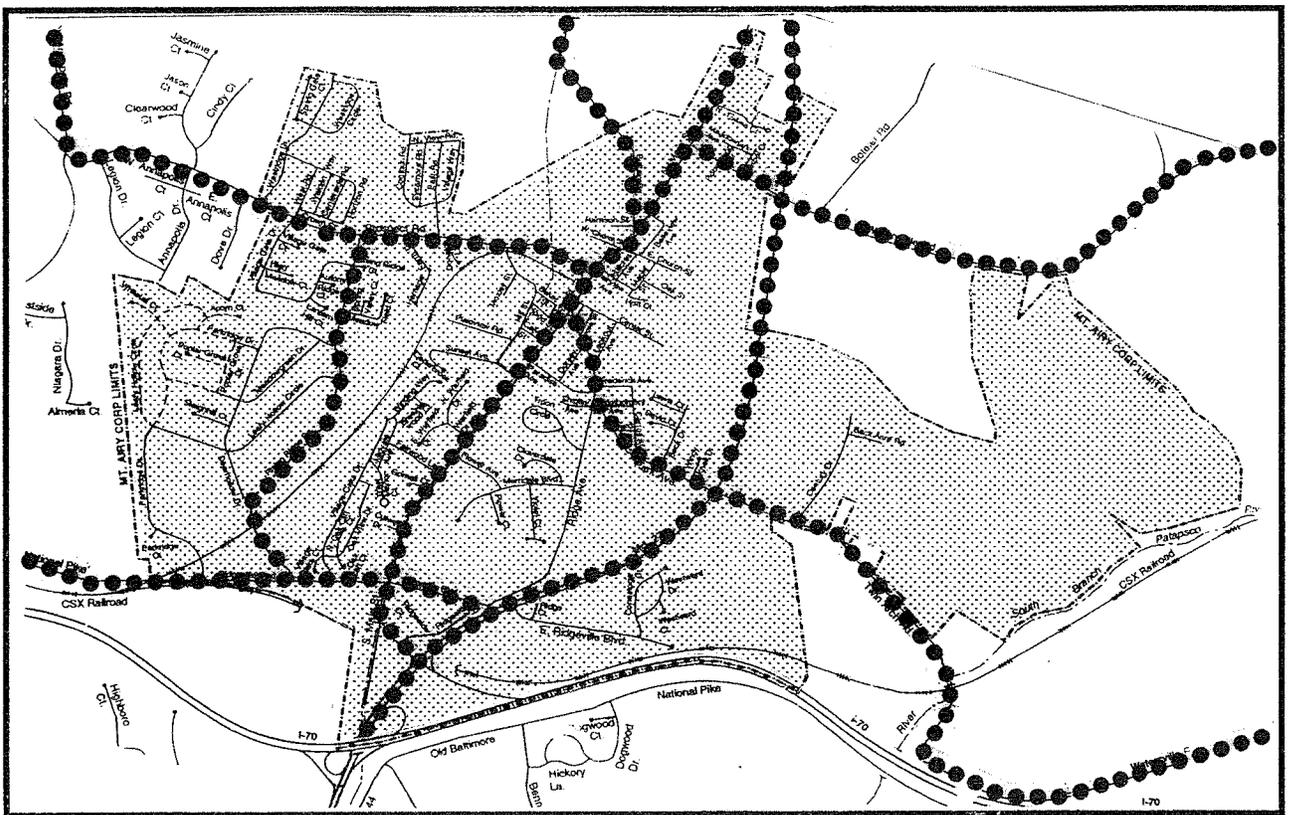


Figure 84: Primary Street Network in 1990

### 3. *Proposed Street System Plan:*

The Street System Plan identifies the streets that should be constructed as development occurs. The plan is based on two premises: provide as many interconnections as possible to promote flexible traffic patterns, and new streets should be designed to enhance vehicular and pedestrian circulation by providing attractive streetscapes.

The Street System Plan identifies streets as arterial or local, however arterial designations are purposely limited to the extension of Rising Ridge Road south, and the extension of Old Annapolis Rd. Higher classifications such as "collector" tend to be designed with greater pavement widths, limited curb cuts, and straighter alignments, all which encourage greater speeds. These characteristics create streets which are hazardous for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and lack many desirable qualities of the older town streets. By providing an interconnected street system made up of "local" streets, car trips are more equally distributed, eliminating the need for high-volume "collector" roads.

The following list corresponds to the Proposed Street System Plan, and briefly discusses the alignment and purpose of each street. The proposed alignments are conceptual, but are intended to conform to known topographic and other site constraints. The streets are listed in relative order of importance.

1. Rising Ridge Road should be extended to Rt. 27 to direct traffic around the intersection of Rt. 144 and Main St. This connection will become increasingly important as additional residential development is permitted north-west of Town in Frederick County, and as the Twin Ridge Professional Park develops.
2. Center St. should be extended to Rt. 27 to provide truck access to businesses on Center St. Currently, the only access to Center St. is via older residential side-streets or from Main St. Beck Drive should be extended north to tie into the Center St. Extension.
3. Village Oaks Dr. should be extended to Rising Ridge Rd. to provide the only possible connection between the new developments west of the railroad tracks and Main St. This connection will also benefit families going to Twin Ridge Elementary School who live on the east side of the tracks.
4. Watersville Road should be extended to Buffalo Road to route traffic around the intersection of Buffalo Rd. and Main St.
5. Ridgeside Dr. should be extended north and connect to an extension of Cherrydale Lane behind the Mt. Airy Shopping Center. This will open the vacant property to development opportunities, and provide a much needed alternate to the intersection of Rt. 144 and Main St. The new intersection of Ridgeside Dr. and E. Ridgeville Blvd. should be signaled to alleviate a poor site distance problem.

Figure 85: Proposed Street System

back of Figure 85

6. Merridale Blvd. should be extended east through the Wildwood Park property, and connect to Park Ave. This will interconnect future development on this site with the Town, and provide an alternate route around the Park Ave. and Ridge Ave. intersection.
7. E. Ridgeville Blvd. should be extended east, through the intersection of Rt. 27, and continue through vacant property south of Parrsville. This new road would cross the east end of E. Ridgeville Blvd. and continue north to Century Drive, allowing car trips generated by new development east of Rt. 27 to move about without burdening Rt. 27.
8. A new road should be built to interconnect new development between N. Main St. and Rt. 27.
9. A new road should connect Prospect Rd. to Buffalo Rd. west of Main St. This would relieve Main St. of some traffic, and interconnect new development in this area.
10. Rising Ridge Road is shown extended north to complete a western bypass around Main Street. A section of this alignment would cross the Town's main wellfield, (10a.) Construction of this portion is not recommended unless traffic necessitates construction of a specially designed road to minimize potential conflict with the wellfields. The portion of Rising Ridge Road that does not traverse the wellfield, (10b,) should be constructed as development occurs.
11. Old Annapolis Road should be extended east to Candice Drive to provide a future direct connection between these two arterial roads.
12. This road would connect Center St. extended to Watersville Rd., and complete the road network that parallels Rt. 27 to the east.
13. The proposed road network in this undeveloped area illustrates an interconnected road system that is coordinated with natural features, the parks plan, and land use recommendations of this Master Plan. While the exact location of these roads may vary, the connections illustrated should be provided.

## B. WATER SYSTEM

### 1. *Existing Water Supply:*

The Town of Mount Airy owns and operates the public water system which provides water to Town residents only. Development currently located in the unincorporated areas use private wells. Unincorporated areas which are planned to be serviced with Town water must first be annexed into Town.

The Town's existing water supply system consists of 7 wells, transmission and feeder mains, and two pumping stations. The Town also has three elevated and one underground storage tanks capable of holding 775,000 gallons in reserve.

The main wellfield is located in Frederick County and consists of wells #1-4. Wells #5 and #6 are in separate wellfields and are located in Carroll County west of Route 27. Well #7 was recently given to the Town by a new development according to the well exploration requirements of Ordinance 1989-2. The total estimated withdrawal from these on-line wells is 724,600 gpd.

### 2. *Future Water Supply - Potential Wells:*

The Town owns one additional well, known as Well #8, and has information on a third potential well currently outside Town boundaries known as Well #9. Both wells are located in Frederick County.

Well #8 was purchased by the Town in December of 1990. Well #8 is located north of Prospect Road and is currently outside Town limits. The Town intends to annex the property including the well at a future date.

Well #9, near the intersection of Buffalo Road and Old Bohn Road, was explored by a potential development group in the spring of 1991 in preparation for an annexation petition. There has been no formal annexation request that would include this well to date, however the well is within the Master Plan's future annexation boundary. The Town should evaluate options for gaining control of this well site.

Figure 86: Town Wells & Their Watersheds

back of Figure 86

3. *Current and Future Water Demand:*

Future water demand has been projected for potential development within current Town limits based on either approved development plans where they exist, or based on zoning for vacant land. Approved development may begin construction immediately and determines the current demand on the water system. Vacant land within Town is zoned for development, and should be studied to understand the ultimate potential demand on the water system.

<u>PROJECTED WATER DEMAND</u>		
A.	EXISTING USE: (average from 2/92 - 7/92):	413,863 gpd
B.	TOTAL APPROVED DEVELOPMENT:	169,140 gpd.
	Residential: 332 units x 250 gpd/unit =	83,000
	42 units x 170 gpd/unit =	7,140
	Commercial: 0 acres x 800 gpd/acre =	0
	Industrial: 79 acres x 1000 gpd/acre =	79,000
C.	TOTAL VACANT LAND (potential development):	665,810 gpd.
	Residential: 1169 units x 250 gpd/unit =	292,250
	428 units x 170 gpd/unit =	72,760
	Commercial: 26 acres x 800 gpd/acre =	20,800
	Industrial: 280 acres x 1000 gpd/acre =	280,000
<hr/>		
	CURRENT DEMAND (Totals A + B):	583,003 gpd
	ULTIMATE WATER DEMAND (Totals A + B + C):	1,248,813 gpd

The existing water supply of 724,600 gpd exceeds the current demand of 583,003 gpd by approximately 20%. The future water supply from wells #1-9 of 1,356,600 gpd exceeds future demand of 1,248,813 gpd by approximately 10%.

If Well #9 is not acquired, the Town's water supply will be 1,005,600 gpd and is inadequate to serve the ultimate Town buildout. Efforts should be made to secure Well #9 or find another water source to sustain the Town's ultimate water demand. Similarly, future annexations should continue to be required to dedicate a substantial well source or donate money into the Well Exploration Fund as is required under Ordinance 1989-2 of the Town Code to maintain a balance of future supply and demand.

## C. SEWER SYSTEM

### 1. Existing Sewer System:

The Town of Mount Airy owns and operates the sewer system which includes seven pumping stations, interceptor and collection lines ranging from 6" to 15" and a sewage treatment plant (STP).

The STP is located approximately one mile east of Rt. 27 along an abandoned length of the B & O Railroad. The plant discharges treated wastewater into the South Branch of the Patapsco River. It has a treatment capacity of and is permitted for an outflow of 600,000 gallons per day (gpd). Currently, the STP handles an average of 383,000 gpd. As of June 30, 1991 sewer service was provided to 4,013 Town residents.

The treatment process consists of a cominutor, bar screen, four extended aeration treatment tanks, an aerobic digester, and ultraviolet lights.

### 2. Projected Sewer Flows:

Typically, the sewer flow is approximately 90% of the water use. During a recent six-month period, this approximation held true as the sewer use was about 93% of the water use. Some infiltration into the older sewer lines can cause a higher sewer flow than would be expected. Future development, however, can be safely projected to produce a sewer flow of 90% of the water use.

<u>PROJECTED SEWER FLOW</u>		
	<u>Water Use:</u>	<u>Sewer Flow:</u>
A. Existing Use:	413,863	383,000 gpd
B. Approved Development:	169,140 x 90%	152,226 gpd
C. Vacant Land:	665,810 x 90%	599,229 gpd
<hr/>		
CURRENT DEMAND (A+B):	583,003	535,226 gpd
ULTIMATE DEMAND (A+B+C):	1,248,813	1,134,455 gpd

Buildout of approved development could occur by the year 1997 if residential development proceeds at an allowed rate of 40 building permits per development per year, however current economic conditions have stalled residential construction activity. Nonetheless, the above figures indicate the need for additional sewer treatment capacity to handle potential development of property already within Town boundaries and, if the Town intends to annex additional land, the ultimate capacity of treatment facilities should be expanded accordingly.



Figure 85: Sewer System, and Sewer and Water Service Area

back of Figure 87

### 3. *Treatment Plant Expansion:*

The Town has begun to study alternatives for the Sewer Treatment Plant expansion. The expansion planning process should consider the following:

1. A goal of operation by the year 1997 to accommodate approved development.
2. An ultimate capacity of at least 1.2 mgd to accommodate ultimate buildout within current Town limits.
3. An ultimate capacity of greater than 1.2 mgd to accommodate any future annexation development.

### 4. *Water & Sewer Service Areas:*

The Water and Sewer Service Area map outlines planned expansion of the water and sewer systems.

The Existing Service Area indicates areas of Town that are currently being serviced by the systems.

The W-1/S-1, or 0-6 Year Service Area indicates areas of Town that would be permitted to connect to the system if they chose to develop. The W-1/S-1 service area includes all undeveloped property within current Town limits.

The W-3/S-3 or 7-10 Year Service Area indicates land that is expected to utilize the Town's water and sewer system in the future, but is not to be allowed to hook up at this time. The W-3/S-3 service area includes property outside current Town Boundaries but within the Ultimate Town Boundaries. The W-3/S-3 designation does not indicate that property should be annexed, but rather if a decision to annex is made, the property would be permitted to connect to the Town water and sewer systems at a future date. (Chapter IV-E, FUTURE ANNEXATION AREAS, discusses issues that should be considered when making a decision to annex.)

The W-5/S-5 or No Planned Service Area indicates land that is not recommended to ever be part of the Town's water and sewer system.

The "year" designations are descriptive only and do not guarantee a property the right to connect to the Town's water or sewer system within any time frame. Any property that is intended to be developed within the Town must be within the Existing Service Area or the 0-6 Year Service Area, or apply for a Water or Sewer Service Area Plan amendment in order to acquire the desired plan designation.

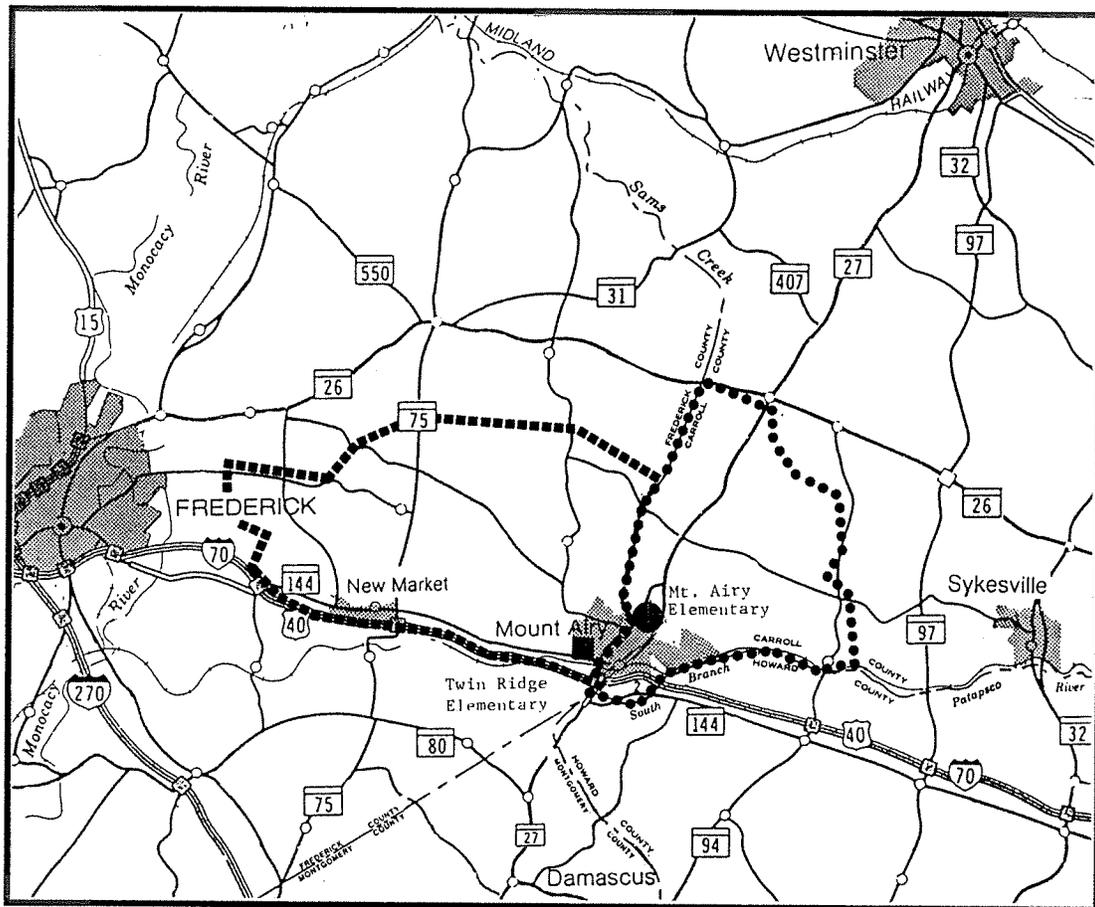
## D. SCHOOLS

Mt. Airy is served by both Carroll County and Frederick County school systems. Typically the children attend schools in their respective counties. Mt. Airy students attend Twin Ridge Elementary, New Market Middle, and Linganore High in Frederick County and Mt. Airy Elementary, Mt. Airy Middle, and South Carroll High in Carroll County.

All schools operate near or above rated capacities due to State funding requirements that often result in overcrowded schools prior to authorization of funds for new construction. Most schools utilize portable classrooms to alleviate overcrowding until new construction or redistricting occurs.

Mt. Airy is equally divided between Carroll and Frederick Counties, and resident children are divided between schools although they may live in close proximity to each other. Most municipalities the size of Mt. Airy have their own elementary and middle schools, and many have their own high schools. While the education of children in each County is of high quality, the division of the children into two school districts compromises a sense of community for the Town of Mt. Airy, particularly at the high school level.

The Town should lead efforts to lobby for additional school construction in the Town. Both a middle school for Frederick County students, and a high school for the Town are desired. Mt. Airy could easily support one high school that would serve both Carroll and Frederick County students from within the Town's corporate limits. While this would require an unusual amount of cooperation between school districts, it is a justifiable request and would significantly benefit the Town and Mt. Airy students. The location of a high school within the Town is also consistent with planning policies of both Carroll and Frederick counties, which have adopted policies to guide new development to the towns and support this growth by locating public facilities there. In addition, a single high school in Mt. Airy would greatly alleviate overcrowding at both Linganore High School and South Carroll High School at a fraction of the expense of a new high school within each County.



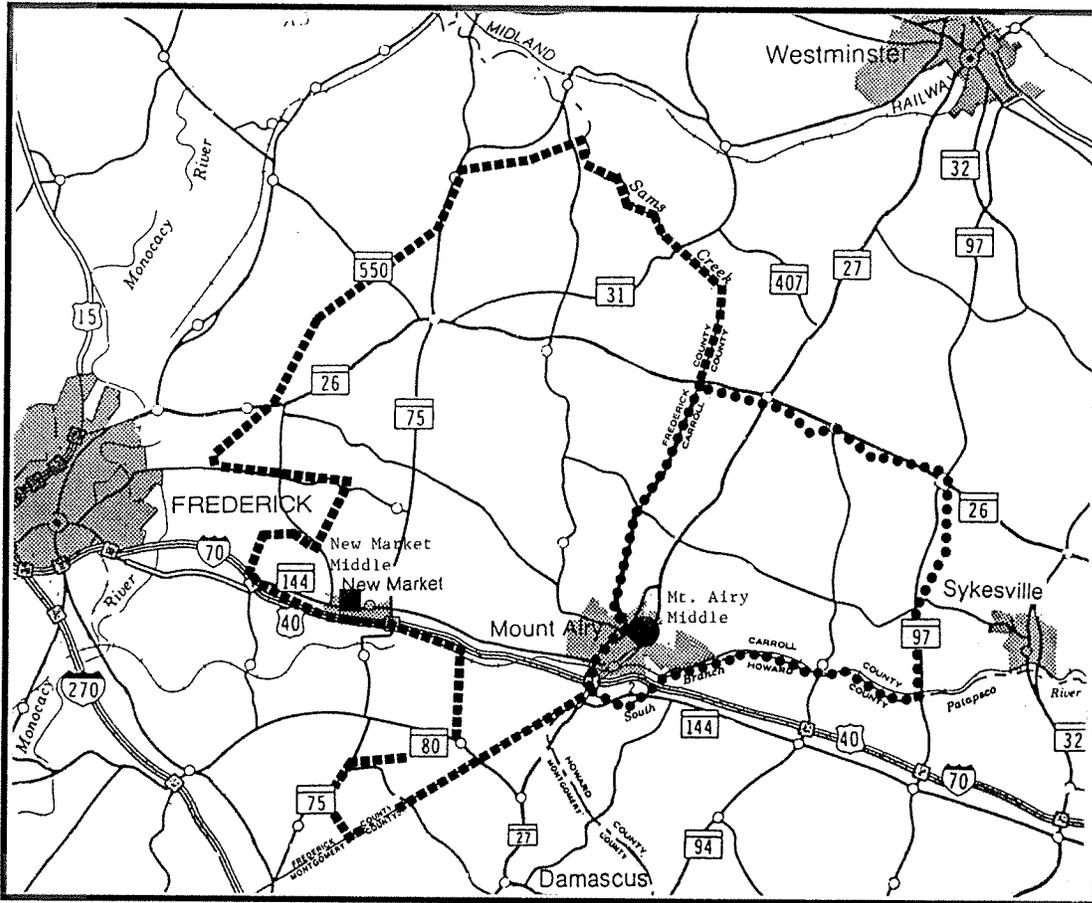
**Figure 88: Elementary School District Boundaries,**  
 (Twin Ridge Elementary School in Frederick County and  
 Mt. Airy Elementary School in Carroll County.)

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAPACITY AND  
 PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	local rated capacity	FTE <u>1990</u>	FTE <u>1995</u>	FTE <u>2000</u>
Mt. Airy Elem.	700	779	864	930
Twin Ridge Elem.	670	n/a	n/a	n/a

\* FTE - Full Time Enrollment

Source: Frederick County BOE, CIP FY 1992-1997, Appendix O and Carroll County Public Schools Facilities Master Plan 1991-2000.



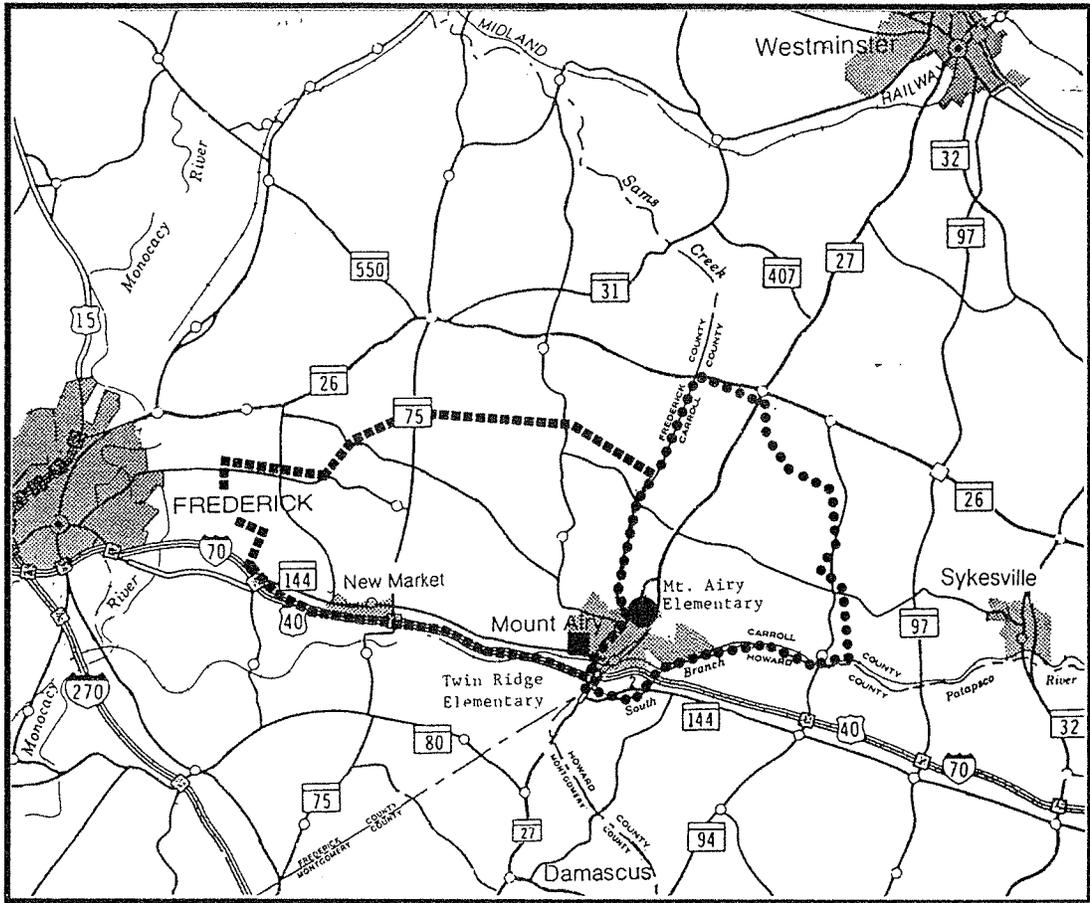
**Figure 89: Middle School District Boundaries,**  
 (New Market Middle School in Frederick County and  
 Mt. Airy Middle School in Carroll County.)

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CAPACITY AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	local rated capacity	FTE <u>1990</u>	FTE <u>1995</u>	FTE <u>2000</u>
Mount Airy Middle	698	603	697	753
New Market Middle	910	1038	1236	1460

FTE - Full Time Enrollment

Source: Frederick County BOE, CIP FY 1992-1997, Appendix O and Carroll County Public Schools Facilities Master Plan 1991-2000.

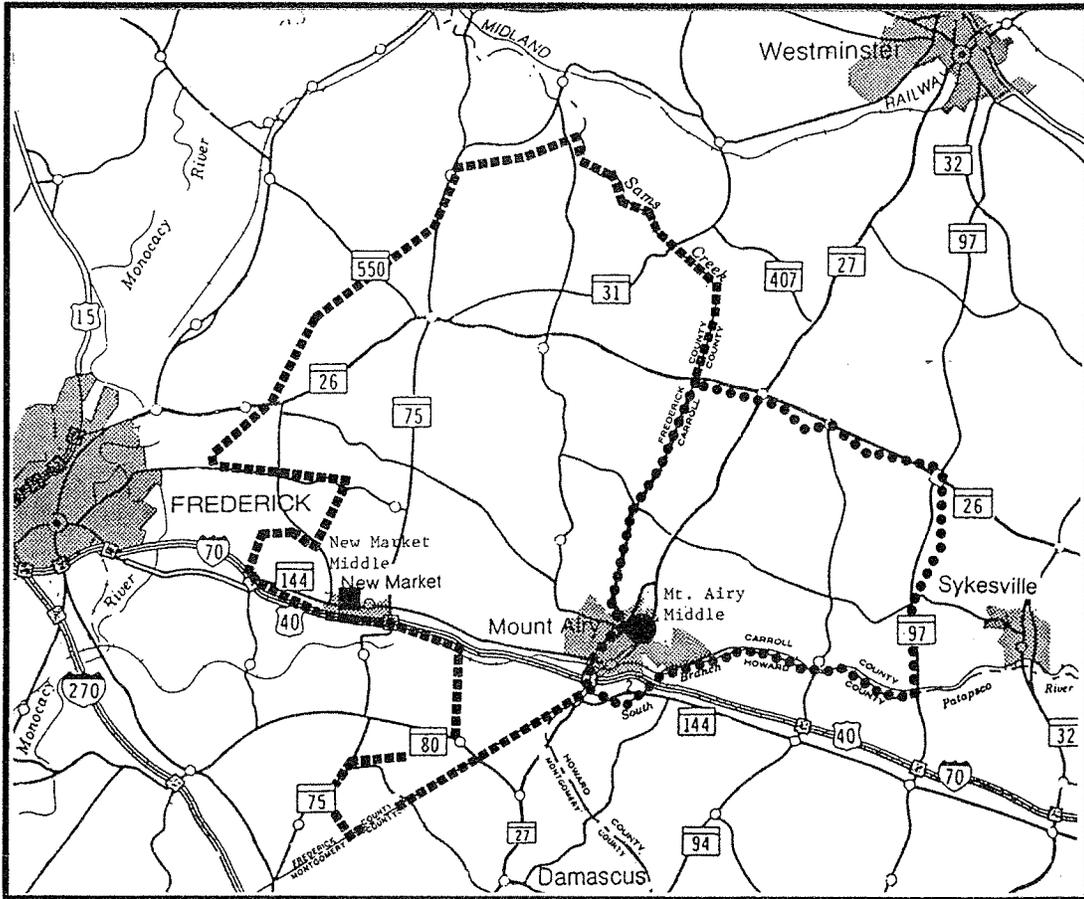


**Figure 88: Elementary School District Boundaries,**  
 (Twin Ridge Elementary School in Frederick County and  
 Mt. Airy Elementary School in Carroll County.)

<u>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAPACITY AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT</u>				
	<u>local rated capacity</u>	<u>FTE 1990</u>	<u>FTE 1995</u>	<u>FTE 2000</u>
Mt. Airy Elem.	700	779	864	930
Twin Ridge Elem.	670	n/a	n/a	n/a

\* FTE - Full Time Enrollment

Source: Frederick County BOE, CIP FY 1992-1997, Appendix O and Carroll County Public Schools Facilities Master Plan 1991-2000.



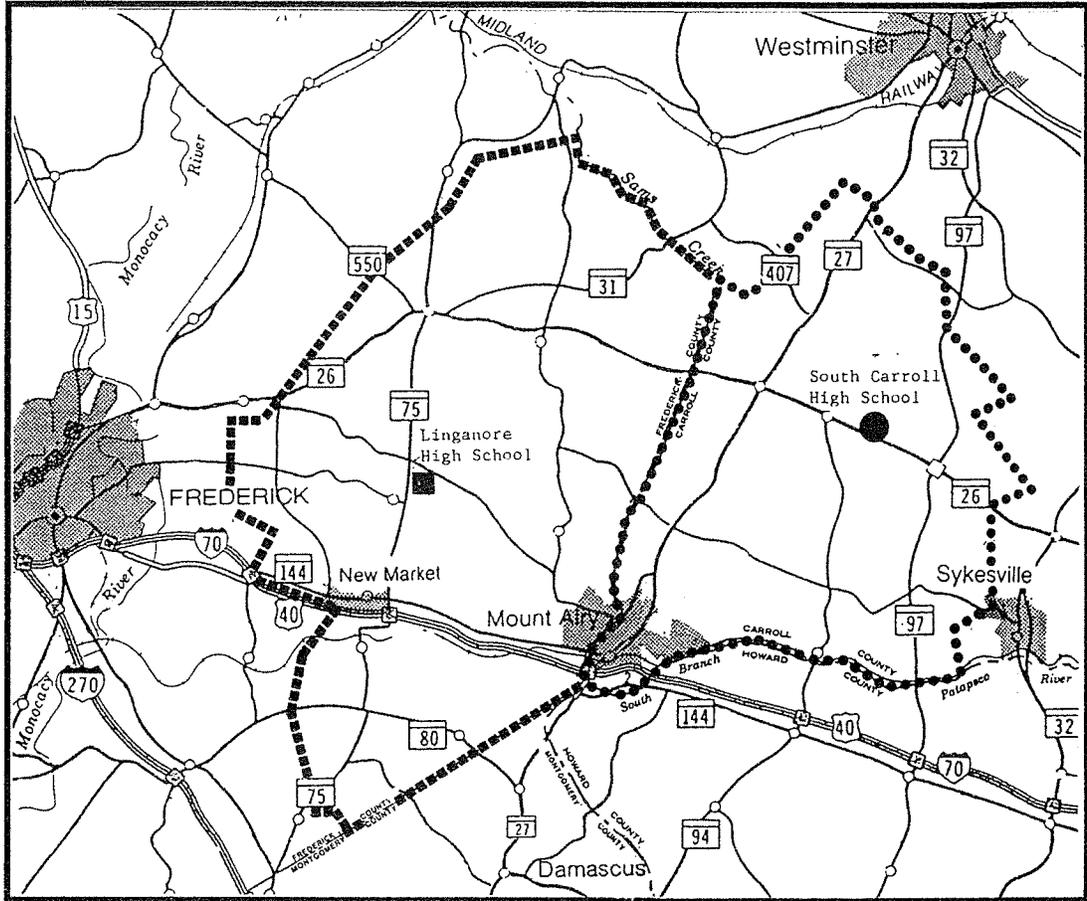
**Figure 89: Middle School District Boundaries,  
(New Market Middle School in Frederick County and  
Mt. Airy Middle School in Carroll County.)**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CAPACITY AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	<u>local rated capacity</u>	<u>FTE 1990</u>	<u>FTE 1995</u>	<u>FTE 2000</u>
Mount Airy Middle	698	603	697	753
New Market Middle	910	1038	1236	1460

FTE - Full Time Enrollment

Source: Frederick County BOE, CIP FY 1992-1997, Appendix O and Carroll County Public Schools Facilities Master Plan 1991-2000.



**Figure 90: High School School District Boundaries,  
(Linganore High School in Frederick County and  
South Carroll High School in Carroll County.)**

**HIGH SCHOOL CAPACITY AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	local rated capacity	FTE <u>1990</u>	FTE <u>1995</u>	FTE <u>2000</u>
South Carroll High	1283	1199	1435	1665
Linganore High	1305	1248	1483	1650

\* FTE - Full Time Enrollment

Source: Frederick County BOE, CIP FY 1992-1997, Appendix O and Carroll County Public Schools Facilities Master Plan 1991-2000.

## E. PARKS AND RECREATION

### 1. *Parks and Recreation Plan Goals:*

Park and recreation opportunities are available to residents from many sources. The Town owns and maintains three parks, several private organizations own recreational fields, and both Carroll County and Frederick County Boards of Education own recreation fields within Town. Parks contribute to an active urban environment and can substitute for the perceived amenities of large lots in rural areas.

The Town Parks and Recreation Commission, however, is charged with overseeing the provision of adequate park land and coordinating use of Town-owned fields. As discussed in Chapter IV, new residential developments must dedicate a portion of their property to the Town for Parks and Recreation purposes, or pay a fee-in-lieu into the Parks and Recreation Commission fund to be used to improve Town-owned park facilities. This dedication is the primary means by which the Town improves its parks system.

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), 10 acres of public park space should be provided for every 1,000 persons. Mt. Airy's population is 3,964 as of the 1990 Census, and would require 40 acres of park land according to this standard. An additional consideration is that many adjacent County residents use Town park facilities. The three town parks, Watkins Park, Prospect Park, and East-West Park total 32 acres, which the standard would suggest is not adequate.

The type of park and recreation activity provided is equally important. A variety of recreation options must be provided for all age groups. Such a range of options may include ball fields for organized team sports, tennis and basketball courts for couples or small groups, hiking and biking trails for individual exercise or leisure, and natural areas for sedentary activities such as fishing or birdwatching. Tot lots should be provided at most public facilities within larger residential developments.

There is a current need for additional ballfields within Town. Because of Mt. Airy's topography, this need has become a great challenge. A significant amount of money is spent grading what land is available land for ballfields. These funds could be better utilized in the future if suitably flat land can be acquired. Although 40% of the land in Town is currently vacant, most of this land is either the subject of approved development plans, or has the characteristic rolling topography of the Town. It is necessary to look at property outside the current Town boundaries for any significant addition to the Town's recreation fields. Figure 91 identifies two locations that suitably flat land is found adjacent to current Town boundaries, (numbered 13 and 15.) To acquire a significant land dedication, the Town should apply the proposed RR zone if these properties are annexed.

Parks and recreation facilities are very important to the perception of a town's character. Attractive and accessible facilities encourage use and are symbols of civic pride. Town parks should be visible and accessible from public roads. Ideally public roads should line an edge of the parks to provide visibility and accessibility. The landscaping and furnishing of park facilities should be done with quality and care.

## 2. *Parks and Recreation Plan:*

To facilitate provision of the appropriate quantity, variety, and design of Town parks, a Town Parks Plan has been developed that identifies locations and proposed facilities. The following briefly describes elements of the plan:

1. Watkins Park is an existing Town park consisting of a ballfield, tennis courts, a volleyball court, a pavilion and a large tot-lot. Adjacent property is owned by the Carroll County Board of Education and may be used with their consent for activities.
2. Prospect Park is a smaller park, consisting of a street hockey court, a tot-lot, a pavilion, a pond, and a volleyball court.
3. East-West Park is an existing park located on the Town's main wellfield. A baseball field has been graded at the north end of this park.
- 4,5. Through the development of the Village Gate subdivision, open space has been dedicated to the Town, and currently two tennis courts are constructed. A soccer field is to be constructed at site 5 in 1994.
6. Through the development of Twin Ridge subdivision, an elementary school and park space were dedicated to the Town. Several ballfields have been constructed on this property, including a baseball field and a soccer field which were dedicated to the Town.
7. A recreation trail is planned extending east-west through the Town. To the east of Main St., this trail will utilize the abandoned B&O railroad bed. Small pedestrian trails extending north into future development should be connected to the main trail. To the west of Main St., the trail may follow low-lying areas along several streams, and lead to the large property owned by the Town (site 14.)
8. Adjacent to the rail-to-trail, a large pond is located on this undeveloped property. As a part of the open space dedication required of this site, the pond should be dedicated to the Town.
9. Connecting the rail-trail south to the Twin Arch bridge, a trail could be developed alongside the South Branch of the Patapsco River. This trail should be coordinated with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources 1992 Patapsco Greenway Study, and Howard County's plans to provide a greenbelt around the County perimeter. Such an extensive trail system would be a major attribute to the Town.
10. At the Twin Arch Bridge, a small "pocket park" could be developed to highlight this historical feature and mark the entry to the Town.

11. Improvements to Twin Arch Rd. that will be constructed by future development should include plans for a wide trail or sidewalk along the road, connecting the trail network back to the center of Town.
12. In Town, the old oak stand at the intersection of Park Ave. and Ridge Ave. should be utilized as a "civic" park. Public or civic facilities would be appropriately located at the edge of the park and should be encouraged.
13. A significant amount of land just outside the Town boundaries and adjacent to East-West Park could be dedicated to the Town if this property were annexed and developed. The park area indicated is relatively flat and would be excellent for additional ballfields.
14. This property was purchased by the Town in December of 1990 to protect a known well source. It is fairly hilly, and would be best utilized for park land, although the two plateaus may be used for some structured activity. The high points on this site are visible from a distance, and would be striking locations for future public or civic building.
15. This property is fairly level and could provide an excellent land dedication for ballfields if annexed and developed.
16. A pedestrian route is encouraged interconnecting the west and east sides of Town south of Prospect Road. This route will utilize sidewalks within existing road rights-of-way. If sidewalks along this route are non-existent or not adequate, they should become priority projects when the Town considers such improvements.

In addition to the above-mentioned facilities, residents have expressed a strong desire to have a community pool built within the Town. Ideally the pool would allow children the opportunity of lessons and league competition. Similarly, Mt. Airy could support an indoor recreational facility in the near future.

Figure 91: Parks & Recreation Plan

back of Figure 91

### 3. *Implementation:*

As mentioned earlier, acquisition of land and funding for parks improvements is largely accomplished by requirements of the Subdivision Ordinance. New residential development is required to dedicate 10% of the property for recreational purposes or pay a fee-in-lieu based on the appraised value of the property. The proposed RR zone would require a dedication of 50% of open space, and may be the primary tool used to acquire park land in the future.

It is possible to anticipate which future development properties could dedicate desirable land, and which should not. A rough estimate of when these properties are expected to develop could guide the Parks & Recreation Commission as to how much land or fee-in-lieu funding they may expect in the near future. An imbalance of anticipated land dedication or fee-in-lieu payments may also help guide decisions as to which option the Town should require of future development. An estimate could be drafted outlining projected expenses for improvements in the Parks Plan. If projected improvement costs significantly exceed anticipated fee-in-lieu revenue, a plan to acquire additional funds should be developed.

## E. EMERGENCY SERVICES

### 1. Fire Department:

Mt. Airy depends on the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Inc. for fire, rescue, and ambulance service. Fire company personnel include approximately 75 active volunteers and 2 part-time paid emergency medical service providers. The fire station, new in 1992, is located at North Main Street and Watersville Road.

From December, 1991 to November, 1992, the fire company responded to 1,366 calls. Of this total, 840 calls were for ambulance service and 526 calls were for fire and rescue service.

The "first due" service area, or area where the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company is expected to respond first, extends well beyond Town limits into both Carroll and Frederick Counties, and a small portion of Howard County. In addition the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Department may be called outside of the first due response area to assist departments in any of the four surrounding counties on "mutual aid" calls. Of the 1,400 calls annually, approximately 51% were into Carroll County, 38% were into Frederick County, 8% were into Howard County, and 3% were into Montgomery County.

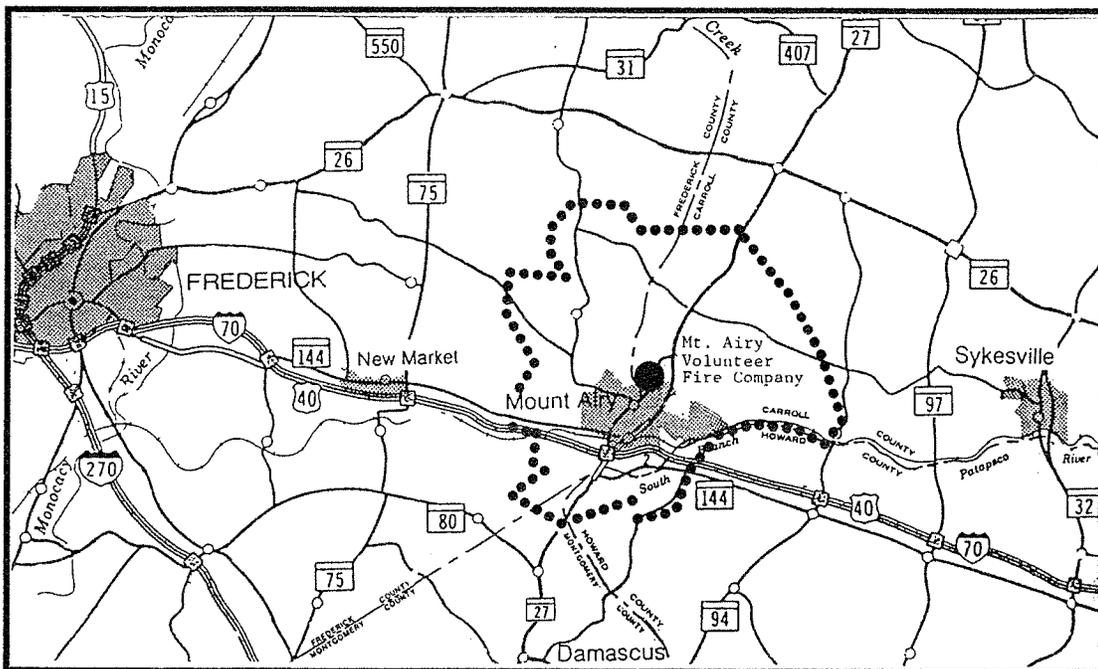


Figure 92: Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company, Area of First Response

## 2. *Police Protection:*

Since 1975 police protection has been provided by the Resident Trooper Program which was instituted as a service to Maryland towns by the Maryland State Police. Mt. Airy currently has three uniformed officers and one criminal investigator through a yearly contract with the Town. Additional troopers are assigned to the Town upon request. State funding for the Resident Trooper Program is in question, and the County and/or the Town may be partially or fully responsible for future funding.

The offices for the Mt. Airy Resident Troopers are currently located on the bottom level of the old library site on Main Street. The Troopers are scheduled to move into the building at the corner of Park Ave. and Main St. which is currently the Town Hall. Calls from the public are routed to the troopers via the "911" emergency telephone system.

## **G. OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Other public facilities in Mt. Airy include the new Parr's Ridge Library and Senior Center, the Mt. Airy Post Office, and the Mt. Airy Town Hall. It is planned that the Town Hall will move into the Library building on Main St. when the Library is moved to the new Parr's Ridge facility. These moves will alleviate current space shortages at both facilities.

The Town purchased an 88-acre parcel adjacent to the north-west Town boundary. No plans have been made for the use of the property at this time, although many suggestions for various public services have been made. These suggestions have included a school, senior housing, and recreation. The Town should reserve the property for future public use: however, development of recreation areas connected to the proposed eastwest trail are encouraged.

## **H. ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCES**

Many jurisdictions have adopted adequate public facilities ordinances (APFO) to ensure that public facilities will accommodate the demand of new development. Frederick County adopted an APFO on October 15, 1991 which reviews road, water system, sewer system and school adequacy. Carroll County is granted similar authority in Section 5.03 (d) (1) of Article 66 B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, which provides for review of schools, roads and traffic control devices, storm drain facilities, emergency services, health care and solid waste disposal facilities.

Mount Airy adopted Ordinance 1989-1, Section 25-4 of the Mt. Airy Code, which addresses certification of adequacy of facilities to the Planning Commission. This ordinance reads similar to the Carroll County provision in Article 66 B. However, for this ordinance to be effective, standards for measuring adequacy must be developed.

Where county services are involved, such as schools, county roads, health care, and solid waste disposal, county standards should be applicable. The Town does have control and

responsibility for the Town's water system, sewer system, roads, and police protection, and may draft standards for measuring the adequacy of these facilities. Fire and rescue services are another common element of many APFO's, however the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company is an independent organization, and it may not be appropriate for the Town to establish adequacy criteria for this service. The following text discusses issues involved with establishing an APFO on certain public facilities:

1. *Water and Sewer Systems:*

Sections 109-19.2, 109-19.3, and 109-19.4 of the Mount Airy Town Code requires the implementation of water allocation permits, however regulations have not yet been developed. Some jurisdictions that have established allocation procedures have found that they allocated capacity to proposed developments that are not carried forward. If all the capacity is allocated, new development is stalled even though the system is not being fully utilized.

However, without an allocation system, it is possible that more development may be approved than the system can support. If the Town does not wish to implement an allocation system, it should establish guidelines to monitor use, establish a policy by which to limit new building if demand exceeds capacity, and make this information available to new development. Additionally, the section of the Town Code that discusses allocation should be repealed if it is not intended to be utilized.

2. *Road Standards:*

Setting standards for road capacity or adequacy is complex. Both Carroll and Frederick Counties have lengthy criteria for determining the level of service on roads. The Town level of acceptability for road conditions may be different than either county's criteria, and new standards specific to the Town may be necessary. The Street Improvements Plan proposed earlier in this Chapter could assist in decisions regarding road-adequacy standards.

3. *Police Protection:*

Future funding for police protection, currently provided by the State through the Resident Trooper Program, may in the future be partially or totally funded by the Town or the County. Current standards for an adequate police force are at least one officer per 1000 people. With a current population of 4,284 people, the Town's four troopers meet the standard. If future funding of police protection becomes the responsibility of the Town, the Town may consider establishing a standard for adequacy of service required by new development.

#### 4. *Fire Protection:*

The Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Inc. operates independently of the Town government and raises funds from both public and private sources. It is therefore unlikely that the Town could enforce adequacy standards based on this service. Currently, a representative of the Fire Company reviews proposed developments in Town and makes recommendations related to fire/safety issues. Among other items, they review the provision and location of fire hydrants, the adequacy of the water supply, and the accessibility of proposed streets and structures.



## VI. IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan serves many purposes. It is an analysis of where we were, where we are now, and where we want to go. The Plan is an internal policy statement, guiding local decision making efforts. A strategy or “plan of attack” is discussed to identify means of achieving the goals. The Plan serves as statement of intent for neighboring governments, developers and similarly interested parties so that they may be aware of Town concerns, coordinate their plans with the Town’s, and work with the Town to better the community for all.

One of the fundamental challenges of the Plan is the constant reminder that all issues are interrelated. Land-use planning, environmental stewardship, infrastructure provisions, and facilities provisions are all affected by each other. When making decisions on any one issue, the indirect impact on other concerns must be weighed.

Many of the Plan recommendations will impact new development. This does not necessarily mean more regulation, but intends to better regulate by ensuring that the Code and Ordinances achieve their intent, that different criteria do not conflict with each other, and to streamline regulation so that it addresses only what is necessary to achieve the desired result.

Each chapter in the Plan outlines actions, programs or similar efforts that can be undertaken to achieve the stated goals. The following text outlines an order for implementation of the primary policies and actions.

### 1. *Zoning Amendments:*

The first priority after the Comprehensive Plan adoption is the drafting of the revised zoning categories and adoption of the zoning text amendments and new zoning map. Until the new zoning map is adopted, the current zoning map governs. If the current zoning map and the 1993 Comprehensive Plan are in conflict, the zoning map prevails.

### 2. *Natural Resource Policies:*

Once the revised Zoning Ordinance and Map are adopted, attention should be focused on review of natural resource protection policies. Of primary concern are water-resource issues including well exploration and protection, and stormwater management practices. Conflicting policies with regard to well exploration and development within the Town Code should be revised.

Problems with the effectiveness, maintenance and design of stormwater management facilities affect every development and will have lasting implications for the Town. Improved steep slope regulations can achieve water resource goals as well and should be part of this second policy review step.

3. *Subdivision Regulations:*

Many of the regulations within the Subdivision Ordinance should be reviewed for compatibility with land-use and zoning goals and natural resource policies. In addition, Chapter III of the Plan calls for a different kind of attention to be given to plan review, considering the "character" of new development as well as infrastructure provisions. This review should be the third step towards implementing Plan goals.

4. *Public Facility and Infrastructure Policies:*

Town policies that affect the provision of infrastructure and facilities required by development should be reviewed. It is very important that new development not decrease the levels of service for the existing community, or create a demand that it is not held responsible for. "Sustainable development," a new phrase often used to describe global environmental responsibility is also appropriately applied to the responsibility that should be borne by development. Infrastructure or facilities that the Town manages, including water, sewer, trash, recycling, street and parks maintenance, and similar services can be comprehensively managed by the Town. The Town should cooperate with county or state efforts to maintain levels of service for schools, county or state roads, libraries and other facilities in part or wholly provided by the county or state.

The Town can improve its management of services and facilities by better tracking techniques. "Master Plans" for the water and sewer systems, road maintenance and construction, parks and recreation improvements, and stormwater management can be drawn to anticipate development at the applicable zoning category and density. Impact fees or dedications that are applicable can also be anticipated, helping to evaluate whether required exactions will meet intended goals.

5. *Inter-Jurisdiction Cooperation:*

Chapter I outlines some of the complex issues the Town must address given its location at the corner of four counties. The Town should continue to promote communication with and between the counties, and pursue discussion of how each county's planning policies affect the Town and the Mt. Airy region.

Of particular importance are Frederick and Carroll County's continued commitment to building a better Mount Airy. This has been achieved and must be continued to be achieved by permitting the Town to control development within its limits, limit development outside the Town, and by locating services where they properly belong, within the established community boundaries. It will take several years to address most of the issues raised in this Plan. The next plan effort, which is required within seven years after the adoption of this Plan, should review the success or problems encountered in adherence to

the policies presented herein. Inevitably some recommendations will have worked and others may have been impossible to implement. The underlying concern of all recommendations is the betterment of the community for all residents, present and future. Adherence to this conviction, through the implementation of this Plan and subsequent revisions, will lead the Town towards a better future.



APPENDIX A  
DIRECTORY OF PLANNING AGENCIES  
AND ORGANIZATIONS

COUNTY AGENCIES

---

CARROLL COUNTY

Carroll County Offices  
County Office Building  
225 N. Center St.  
Westminster, Maryland 21157  
(410) 848-4500

*Department of Planning and Development:*

Edmund R. Cueman, Director  
K. Marlene Conaway, Assistant Director  
Sandra L. Baber, Liaison Planner for Mt. Airy

*Bureau of Water Resource Management:*

Catherine M. Rappe, Bureau Chief  
Tom Devilbiss, Hydrogeologist

*Office of Environmental Services:*

James Slater, Administrator  
Neil Ridgely, Program Director, Division of Landscape and Forest Conservation

*Bureau of Stormwater Management and Sediment Control:*

Kristin D. Barmoy, P.E., Bureau Chief

*Office of Economic Development:*

Bill Jenne, Administrator

FREDERICK COUNTY:

Winchester Hall  
12 East Church Street  
Frederick, Maryland 21701  
(301) 694-1134

*Planning and Zoning Department:*

James R. Shaw, Planning Director  
Elizabeth Pasierb, Liaison Planner for Mt. Airy

**HOWARD COUNTY**

Department of Planning and Zoning  
Joseph W. Rutter, Jr., Director  
George Howard Building  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043  
(410) 313-2350

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Department of Planning  
Robert W. Marriott, Jr., Planning Director  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760  
(301) 495-4500

**REGIONAL AGENCIES:**

---

**BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

Charles Krautler, Director  
601 North Howard Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-4585  
(410) 333-1750

*Member Jurisdictions:*  
Baltimore City  
Anne Arundel County  
Baltimore County  
Carroll County  
Harford County  
Howard County

**FREDERICK COUNTY**  
**COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Louise Snodgrass, President  
Winchester Hall  
12 East Church Street  
Frederick, Maryland 21701  
(301) 694-1153

*Member Jurisdictions:*  
Brunswick  
Burkittsville  
Emmitsburg  
Frederick City  
Frederick County  
Middletown  
Mount Airy  
Myersville  
New Market  
Rosemont  
Thurmont  
Walkersville  
Woodsboro

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

William T. Newman, Jr., President  
777 North Capitol Street N.E.,  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4201  
(202) 962-3210

*Member Jurisdictions*  
Frederick, MD  
Montgomery, MD  
Prince George's, MD  
Arlington, VA  
Fairfax, VA  
Loudoun, VA  
Prince William, VA

**STATE AGENCIES:**

---

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Robert Perciasepe, Secretary  
2500 Broening Highway, Bldg. 30A, 2nd Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21224  
(410) 631-3084

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Torrey C. Brown, MD, Secretary  
Tawes State Office Building  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(410) 974-3041

**MARYLAND OFFICE OF PLANNING**

Ronald M. Kreitner, Director  
301 W. Preston St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201-2365  
(410) 225-4500

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

State Highway Administration  
Hal Kasshof, Administrator  
707 N. Calvert Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
(410) 333-1111

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

Division of Historical and Cultural Programs Department of Housing and Community Development  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023  
(410) 514-7600

**FEDERAL AGENCIES:**

---

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

Planning Division  
Col. Frank R. Finch, District Engineer  
Fallon Federal Building  
P.O. Box 1715  
Baltimore, Maryland 21203  
(410) 962-4545

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Soil Conservation Service for Maryland  
Robert J. Klumpe, State Conservationist  
339 Revell Highway  
John Hansen Business Center, Suite 301 Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(410) 757-0861

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

Chesapeake Bay Program  
Tom McCully, Information and Education  
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107  
Annapolis, Maryland 21403  
(410) 267-0061